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Mair, William, 1830-1920.
My life

Alexander Lawson,
Edinburgh.

1913.



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MY LIFE



BY THE VERY REV.
WILLIAM MAIR, D.D.

FORMERLY MINISTER OF EARLSTON
MODERATOR OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, 1897
AUTHOR OF 'DIGEST OF CHURCH LAWS'
'SPEAKING,' ETC.

HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON NEW YORK TORONTO

MCMXI

TO MY WIFE

‘Thou shalt remember all the way
which the Lord thy God led thee.’

DEUT. viii. 2

PREFATORY NOTE

THOSE who have the best right have often expressed the wish for some account of what has befallen me on the long journey that I have come, the more because they have heard friends wondering how I have come through at all. I long shrank from it, for prolonged speaking of self is acutely distasteful. When at last I began the task, my intention was to write only a sort of outline for private circulation among those who might wish it, believing that others would care nothing about me. But others interposed, and, wisely or not, I have been persuaded to give up that intention.

Autobiography must always have the appearance of egotism and self-glorification. And, if the reality underlay this appearance, I should throw down my pen in fear. I believe that 'man's chief end is to glorify God,' and that this is made his chief pleasure also. 'I give Thee back the life I

owe.' He has done with me, for me, by me, as it hath pleased Him. Nothing, therefore, could have been better for me. But 'Where is boasting then? It is excluded.'

I have hope also that this writing may encourage some when they see what one may be brought through, and by what means, and what things unthought of by him he may be called, in spite of unworthiness and rather severe physical limitations, to undertake and enabled to accomplish. All this being so, I see no sufficient reason why that which I have to say should be kept secret till after I am gone.

I trust I need hardly make excuse for having no famous men to speak of, or for mentioning plain, unknown friends for what they have done. As with minor people, so with minor events: to some extent they are necessary in the illustration of a life. There are many things which would naturally have been written first in letters to friends; but their being given here seems to come to the same thing as when such letters are reproduced by biographers.

The better to allow of discovering any onward movement, or any sequence of cause and effect,

chronological order has in the main been followed. For the awkwardness that must sometimes arise from affairs running simultaneously I can only apologise. The method may have the disadvantage of appearing to mix up divers matters. Yet such a mixture is true to life, and makes life wholesome.

For the sake of accuracy in details I have troubled many friends, and am very grateful to them. Two men of Buchan like myself, of two generations, the Rev. R. G. Forrest, D.D., West Coates, Edinburgh, and the Rev. J. M. M'Pherson, B.D., Newmill, Keith, have taken an interest in the work throughout, and have been most helpful and encouraging.

Since the first sentence of this work was written a year has gone by, and I am now eighty-one.

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CHAPTER I

BOYHOOD TO LICENCE

THIS is my birthday. I am now eighty years of age. I was born in 1830, on Thursday the first day of April. Let us suppose that this day, renowned for its fooling, deals not unkindly with its own children. I am the fifth child and first son of a family of seven sons and five daughters, of whom five survive. One of my brothers, born in a leap year, had a narrow escape from having a birthday only once in four years. We were all born in Savoch, Aberdeenshire. It was then in the parish of New Deer, but has itself been a parish since 1851—constituted of parts taken from New Deer, Old Deer, Ellon and Tarves. My college class-fellow, Dr. John Milne, in his *Place-Names of Aberdeenshire*, says Savach is the pronunciation of the Gaelic *Samhach* which means quiet, mild, pleasant.

There my father was parochial schoolmaster, James Mair, Master of Arts, and a probationer of the Church of Scotland, as schoolmasters in those

parts mostly were at that time. My mother was his cousin, one of the Johnstons of that district, daughter of a farmer whose ancestors had occupied the same farm for one hundred and fifty years.

We were on the estate of Lord Aberdeen, and from him father rented about a dozen acres. The nearest range of fields ran rapidly down, and at the foot of the descent, amid the only trees within eyeshot, was a fruitful garden with a copious spring by its side—our well and watering-place. This garden and the fields on the same level father had reclaimed from being almost, if not altogether, bog. The rent was never raised. Among those trees, when I had reached that stage in my studies, I practised speaking. In one of them we had a magpie's nest, to which we early learnt to climb.

Four words of my mother's are the earliest that I remember, and they have cleaved to me to this day. She had called me in from play to rock the infant's cradle. This was very hard, and I ventured on the timid remonstrance, 'Why?' 'Because I bid you,' was the quiet, calm reply—words that sound the keynote of duty for a lifetime.

For boys who lived near the road that ran past

our door nothing of a public kind had an earlier place in the memory than Aikey Fair Day. On that day in July a very old—for it began in 1661—and very popular fair was held on Aikey Brae,¹ a mile to the west of Old Deer. People of all ages and classes gathered to it for business or for pleasure. Whole families would go with a horse and cart and stay on the field overnight, for the fair extended to next day. Our interest in it became exciting on the afternoon of the first day when droves of young cattle from it, now the property of southern buyers, poured past on their way south in an almost continuous stream, and great was the prowess we displayed in saving fields where the road was unfenced. As the evening drew on we had a new excitement when

¹ Pratt in his *Buchan*, giving a reference to *View of the Diocese of Aberdeen*, says there was here a crag, known as ‘Cummin’s Craigie,’ where, in the reign of Alexander III., one of the Cummins, Earl of Buchan, met his death in accordance with this prediction of Thomas the Rhymer—

Though Thomas the Lyar thou call’st me,
A sooth tale I shall tell to thee :
By Aiky-side thy horse shall ride,
He shall stumble and thou shalt fa’ ;
Thy neck-bane shall break in twa,
And maugre all thy kin and thee,
Thy own belt thy bier shall be.

Tradition also says that this brae was the scene of the final defeat of the Comyns in the time of Robert Bruce.

noisy riders in twos and threes came careering past. In that calamitous year of drought, 1826, 'the year o' the short crop,' my father's diary records: 'Aikey Fair a bad market—only 500 cattle passed instead of sometimes 1200 or 1600.' It was the great fair of Buchan—that is, between the Ythan and the Deveron. It is as a market for horses that it is important now.

We had another and still unforgotten highway sight once a year, and lasting for some days, at the time of peat driving. Soon after four o'clock in the morning we would hear in our sleep empty farmers' carts briskly passing down the road on their way northwards to the moss of Drum, more than half-way to New Deer. For the return journey they contrived to start together, and about nine o'clock repassed with skilfully built loads, and in a line of, it might even be, a score. The horsemen were proud of their well-groomed horses and finely kept harness, and the horses themselves seemed to enjoy the procession. I believe all still goes on as at that day. In kitchens the fire was wholly of peat, burning on the hearth; in other rooms there would be a grate and perhaps some coal, but this was at a price which few could afford.

The mention of horsemen recalls our gazing

with wonder when we first saw the science that seemed magical with which in those days they lighted their pipes. They had no lucifer match. This was quite a new invention, and had not come into general use. The smoker took from his pocket some well-protected ordinary brown paper. So it seemed, but he had saturated it with some combustible and dried it. I believe the stuff was saltpetre (nitre). Taking a little bit of the paper he then brought out a small piece of flint with a blunt edge. Flat on the flint he placed the paper, their edges flush. Then he took his strong pocket-knife clasped, and brought the back of the blade down across the edges with a sharp swift stroke, like an emphatic down-stroke of the fiddle-bow, when, lo, a spark ! and the paper began to burn and fizzle. Instead of the knife, it was still more scientific to have a steel made at the smithy, with an artistic hold for the fingers.

If a neighbour brought a blind beggar to your door, the custom was that you should lead him on to the next house. Once when I was entrusted with this service my strength of will, or arm, was not always sufficient to direct his steps, and he took one that did not please him. Whereupon he snatched away his hand, and stood and stamped

and swore so tremendously that I fled to report him at the next house.

I could scarcely have been nine when a little Shetland pony was got for me and my brother James, and committed to our care. Not to speak of the knowledge that we gathered, an excellent effect must have been produced on us by the duty of regularly tending 'Robbie' in all seasons and circumstances, in the stall and on the tether, in the dark cold mornings of winter, or in summer on the dewy grass, with the happy song of the lark overhead. We had our difficulties to face. When his views differed from ours, we had to set our wits against his strength—not always successfully. His superfluous liveliness might make it expedient to mount him in the stall rather than in the open, and then you might see us dashing forth at full gallop as if to cut our way through besiegers. Again there might be slipperiness everywhere, a trial to all parties. As for riding, we could not have had a more exacting, or a better teacher than he was. In Cook's Circus, exhibiting at Ellon, I would fain like others have mounted a pretty little pony whose business it was to throw its rider, but, of course, father would not allow me. Then we had

our little dove-cot and our rabbit-house. How far away it all is ; and yet how near it comes ! The boy looks on the old man, and the old man on the boy, till neither, like Joseph as he saw himself a boy again among his brothers, can refrain himself.

A real snowstorm was terrible to us, and could not be forgotten. Only a faint light came through the snow-blinded windows. Opening the door felt like suffocation. None but the strong ventured out, and they did not go beyond the premises. When a storm threatened a spade was brought in, lest the door should be blocked in the morning. Vessels were filled from the well, and to some extent snow melted over the fire was counted on. If the storm blew against the front of the house, the reflux of the wind carried back the snow so as to leave a bare and narrow path between the stone wall and the snow wall of even greater height, magnificently finished at the top with the most picturesque and beautiful designs of nature's own modelling. When the storm had passed, this path was quite a romantic run for us. It was a sight to see with what dash companies of men from the farms cut a road through the snow, and with what enjoyment we pranced in the novel road with its great walls of snow towering so far

above our heads. Then came great doings for us: we tunnelled, we cut stairs, we hewed out caverns, we constructed underground dwellings. Weeks passed, our ingenuity was exhausted, and still the snow lay, not greatly reduced by recurrent feeble thaws. Where it had been shallow we rejoiced to see patch after patch of fields re-appearing; it looked like life from the dead. But where it had been deep around our home it held on till we were weary of it, and at last took to loosening it up to hasten its departure. Great was our delight when it was seen that the one remaining speck had gone. Buchan still has its turn of such storms, as witness last two winters.

I remember being taken to see Savoch church when its erection was little more than begun. It was opened in 1834. Naturally my father took an active interest in it from the first. Among his heirlooms is a silver snuff-box with the inscription: 'From Savoch Chapel Committee to the Revd. Jas. Mair In Testimony of their sense of his valuable services in promoting the erection of the Chapel, 1835.' After its opening he kept—and beautifully it was done—a Sabbath diary in which was entered the preacher, the text, and the

collection, with a column for the silver it included. The ministers of the four interested parishes officiated in turn, two intervening days being supplied by probationer schoolmasters in the presbytery. I wonder what the present generation would say to sitting in church without any means of heating in such weather as I have described, as was usual in country churches.

The finest and most impressive spectacle that I have seen was an eclipse of the sun which occurred when I was just six years of age. All the circumstances conspired to heighten the effect. It was a day of bright sunshine, beautiful and calm, in the middle of May. It was Sunday, and we were on the way home from church along with friends and neighbours. We halted at the highest part of our route, and had before us an extensive landscape and a wide horizon around. The eclipse was very nearly total. Words cannot reproduce the effect. It was neither the twilight of evening nor the dawn of morning. I have seen many nights with about the same amount of light, but least of all was it like to them. It did not feel like night, and yet it was as dark as many a fine night. It seemed as if a little daylight coloured the darkness. I think one or two of the brighter stars were seen (no moon, of course). Birds and beasts became silent, and

behaved as in the night. I have seen nothing to compare with it.

The universal attire of ministers all days of the week, but beginning to change, was not of the nature of a uniform peculiar to them, with the exception that the bulky neckcloth, or more artificial 'stock' was white. Otherwise the dress was that of a gentleman of the time—the collar upstanding at the cheeks (the 'Gladstone'), a dress coat ('swallow-tailed'), a moderate extent of white breast, a silk (or satin) hat, and gloves. These last were of black kid, or black silk, and were worn in the pulpit. I have seen little openings to accommodate the points of the right-hand forefinger and thumb. Any kind of hood in the pulpit is quite a modern form of display. The next coat was the double-breasted frock coat (surtout). The next collar was the turned down (doubled) with tie in the form of a bow. Afterwards came the clerical coat, that is, the single-breasted frock usually held together by the top button only, and with varying length (understood to be significant), while collar and necktie gave place to a deep and ever deepening hard-starched white band; the breast is entirely black; if gloves are worn, they are not taken to the pulpit.

Many affect a soft 'wide-awake' hat, and the younger men are not unfrequently to be seen in a jacket, which those who wish to respect the ministry would rather not see. When I was a boy, only side whiskers were worn; but men were beginning to take their own way, and the whole beard rather came into vogue; following this came the present fashion which divides the honours between nothing but the moustache and nothing at all. When I was 'sitting' to Sir George Reid (p. 209) he said, from his point of view, men should have the whole beard or nothing, and his preference was for the former, if at all presentable. So also said King Edward VII.

There still survived in the north, at least to the north of the Tay, public diets of examination or catechising, held yearly by the parish minister. Intimation was given that—place and date—the minister would hold a diet of examination for a specified district. Young and old attended. I suppose that none under twelve were expected, for the number of sittings required in a new parish church were not fewer than two-thirds of the 'examinable persons' in the parish, and these are held to be persons not under twelve. The minister, taking one at a time, would ask a question in the Shorter Catechism, and would

inquire what Book of Scripture had been read, asking something from it—always, of course, suiting himself to the person in hand, and not always adopting the form of a question. Opportunities of a word from himself were never missed. The only catechising at which I remember being present was in our new church, when I would be not more than twelve. The book that I professed was the Book of Jonah ! The practice had nearly come to an end, owing, I dare say, to diminishing attendance, unsuitableness to the times, and the methods of other Churches. Since then house-to-house visitation has been the practice, and certainly without catechising. The old way obviously had the effect of making people refresh their religious knowledge at least once a year, and of leading to some careful reading of Scripture. It nourished the conviction that Scripture truth is a thing to be known and kept in mind. It also gave an opportunity of meeting with the minister and, so to speak, having a religious conversation with him ; more wholesome than what is now too often seen—ministers on platforms (would that it were never in the pulpit itself !) apparently to amuse.

A very reverent and becoming custom in church

which prevailed, at least in some parts, was that most women made a little curtsy at the close of the benediction. In all parts the whole congregation, having humbly and prayerfully heard and received the all-embracing ‘Blessing’—of Father and Son and Holy Ghost—and knowing that it included all that heart needed or could wish or receive, moved at once silently from the Presence.

Changes of the forms in public worship began with the sixties, and gradually came in. Standing to pray and sitting to sing gave place to sitting at prayer and standing to sing. Our first hymn book bears date 1863. It was compiled by a Committee of Assembly and contained eighty hymns. In 1864 the Assembly agreed to ‘allow’ its publication. In 1870 the *Scottish Hymnal* was published containing two hundred hymns, and bears to be ‘By authority of the General Assembly’; but curiously the giving of this authority does not appear in the records. ‘The ladle’ took the collection. It was a small box on the end of a handle of sufficient length to reach along a pew. In the hand of the elder it was used quietly, decorously, and deftly, as well as with a due sense of the importance of the duty.

Churches in my youth were very plain buildings,

but I have never liked to hear them spoken of in such terms as have sometimes been applied to them. To the people of many generations they were the House of God. There our fathers and mothers assembled on the first day of the week—Jesus in the midst. ‘The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there.’

They were generally oblong buildings with the pulpit at the middle of one of the side walls, and galleries on the other three. For the Lord’s Supper a table seated on both sides ran from end to end. This was either permanent, or for the occasion took the place of movable pews. At the close of one table-service the communicants left by one end, while a new company were entering from the other; as they moved both sung verses of Psalm ciii. The precentor supplied the words by ‘giving out’ two lines at a time, in monotone on the last note he had sung. Religious, not to say spiritual, feeling seemed much deeper than now. The singing (though not the Psalm) was ordained by the General Assembly of 1645, also ‘that the bread be so prepared that the communicants may divide it among themselves, after the minister hath broken and delivered it to the nearest.’ In Savoch church the bread was

cut into small cubes neatly placed on the plate, and this was passed along, each communicant taking one from it. At that time this was the practice in the city of Aberdeen itself. It is so still in Savoch and, I believe, in most places in the north.

It is within living memory that in Orkney oat-cakes, to which some butter was added in the baking, were used. I like to think of its being the people's daily bread, enriched. In the south-west of Scotland the use of shortbread seems to have been universal. It is understood that in both those parts of the country the kind of bread used—their best—had come down from the days when the baker's loaf was, to say the least, an alien there. But when people cling to an old custom the reasons they assign for it grow in greatness. And so a friend tells me that when he was settled in a parish in the synod of Galloway—his first parish—thirty-eight years ago, and found the custom there, it was accompanied by the opinion that the fact of shortbread being unleavened was a scriptural reason for its use. In one parish, almost surely the last, the old way survived till four or five years ago. Throughout the land in most country parishes the communion was held only once a year, one of the reasons adduced for this being that so it was with the Passover.

Over the pulpit there was almost always a canopy. Its underside was flat, and on this was raised a roof drawing to a point, on which might sometimes be seen a white dove, emblematic of the descent of the Holy Spirit. It was spoken of as the 'sounding board.' My belief is that it was architectural—considered to be part of a correctly designed pulpit, or an appropriate ornament. In acoustics at any rate there was no good reason for it. Affixed to the side of the pulpit was a metal bracket into which, when required, was placed a vessel with water for baptism. The position was such as to be convenient both for the minister in the pulpit and also for the parent.

If those churches were plain, have we not now been going, like the pendulum, to the opposite extreme? Much less money than is spent to erect a showy church, or one that is conform to some ecclesiastical theory, would build a most becoming and excellent church. Could not part of the large sum be spent on something much more precious in the sight of Him whom we are desiring to serve and honour? In one thing it is obvious that many of our present churches compare ill with the past. Every person then could at least see and hear the minister. Many of the erections of, say the last half century, show little regard for acoustics. An architect,

cultured in his profession above most, with whom I conversed on this subject, entirely agreed in all I said, but added that the blame is not with the architect. 'Tell us,' he said, 'what you want and we will give it. Say if your church is for speaking and hearing in, or for show, or the embodiment of some theory, or for music, or for what.'

One of the four ministers whom I mentioned as officiating at Savoch was Mr. Robertson of Ellon, a native of Buchan, who became Professor of Divinity and Ecclesiastical History in the University of Edinburgh. He was a powerful controversialist in pre-disruption times, and became an honoured leader in the church (p. 303). I first saw him in this pulpit. To my eye he was a man with a large head covered with jet black hair, a countenance that was not attractive, and a strong penetrating voice, at times causing me something like fear. While preaching he dipped his finger and thumb into his vest pocket for liberal pinches of snuff. Though his sermons were not easily followed, he must at least have convinced his hearers of his true, earnest, Christian-heartedness, if we may judge from the following traditional story of two women who came to hear

him preach : (1st) ‘ Oh, but he’s an ill-faured¹ lookin’ man ’ ; (2nd) ‘ Ay, but he has a bonnie inside.’

I may anticipate by mentioning here two curious links between his name and mine. The first is, that just thirty years before me he won the Gray mathematical prize at college. The other is stated by Dr. Taylor Innes in his Introduction to Professor A. B. Davidson’s *The Called of God*. Referring to me he says, I ‘ was in 1897 Moderator of its General Assembly, and next year led that Assembly, after sixty years’ delay, to take publicly the same advanced position (p. 317) which Dr. Robertson of Ellon had taken privately in 1843.’ Of this I was not aware.

I am told that the family physician in my early years announced that I should have been born with a silver spoon in my mouth, thereby conveying his opinion that the work-a-day world would be hard on me. This was unknown to me when in my early teens I had occasion to consult the most eminent physician north of Edinburgh (Kilgour, Aberdeen), and I well remember how I was taken aback—so little do young people know about health—when he said, ‘ You must remember you

¹ Ill-favoured.

are a delicate lad,' and, for instance, forbade the much-extolled walk before breakfast. Yet no boy ever entered more keenly into games—football and all—or came more successfully out of a fight. My height has been five feet eight inches, and net weight never above eight stones. A walk of more than three miles was always fatiguing. I have wondered how it feels to be large-boned and full of physical strength.

In our home the strictest economy had to be practised, and when I was in the city, alone or with my brother, every penny we spent was accounted for. The beloved box from home also regularly came and went by the carrier.

For the heating of the school every boy had to bring a peat daily, or pay fire-money; and, as peats were more plentiful than coins, the former course was all but universal. The case might be met by a cartload at a time. The discipline of the school was thorough, and the teaching highly intelligent.

A few years ago I went to see the old place. Happily there was no ruin or degradation. Not a vestige of home or school was there; not one sign that any human being had lived there. Green sward covered the spot as part of a pasture field. Entirely undistinguishable, yet how it gripped the

heart ! The past came back. Loved faces re-appeared—a whole family, parents, and children, a whole swarming playground. Yet the silence did but deepen. What would they say, could they but speak ! What would I say, could they but hear ! Why are we parted thus ? They have gone because their work was done. Would that I could tell them what things have been done in our day ! But they have gone up higher, and beckon me to follow. Soon will silence brood over our place also. Surely Thou hast not made men in vain. But we see the removing of those things that may be shaken that those things which cannot be shaken may remain (Heb. xii.)

I first left home to attend the Grammar School of Aberdeen for six months, under the famous Latinist, Dr. James Melvin. This proved an education, the excellent effects of which are with me even now. In particular the translating of English into Latin ('version writing') as done by him was valuable, because of the exactness demanded in estimating and expressing the meaning of both languages. Nothing could be better adapted to develop the power of thinking. I was far behind when I entered—an aggravation to home-sickness—but in the end was given the first

prize among the pupils who had taken only part of the session. Of this school also there is not left one stone upon another.

I had scarcely opened my eyes in the city when I found myself in a new world, and in nothing more distinctly than in educational matters. The first step was to go with my father to be introduced to Dr. Melvin. We were ushered into his room to wait a few minutes for his coming. The very sight took my breath away. It was a spacious room, and literally every inch of wall seemed to be occupied with books beautifully placed together. Even had I been told, I could not have understood the extraordinary character and value of that collection. He left it to Marischal College. The spectacle was enough for me : I was like one that dreamed. The doctor came in, and after a little conversation with father he spoke to me with such kindly encouragement that I completely broke down. He was then forty-nine years of age—a native of Aberdeen. In appearance, as I afterwards came to see him, he was almost tall, with a fine head, bald in front. His face was darkish pale, and pockpitted ; and he was a heavy snuffer. The whole gave the impression of sternness, and among the boys his only name was ‘ Grim.’ But, though he was very strict in everything, could be severe

with his tongue, and caused terror over the worst kind of offences, he was a kindly man at heart, and considerate. Discipline was perfect—the discipline of influence, not of drill. He never spoke loud or fast, or walked fast. When a boy had to be remonstrated with he was called close up to the desk, and the words might be accompanied by a punch on the front of the shoulder. When he wished to speak tenderly, or more expressively, he would use the language in which they both had spoken at first. Dr. Gray (pp. 64, 188) used to tell that on the first day, as he sat at the foot of the class, the doctor came and sat down beside him, and after some questions to test his fitness, shook his head and said, ‘ Oh, Sandy, man, I doot yiv (you have) made a mistack in comin’ here.’ So afterwards, on a success by Gray, he took the first chance of saying with delight, ‘ Ay, Sanners, man ! we ’ll maybe mack something o’t yet.’

His reading with us of our Latin authors was most thorough—mastering every sentence, word, and phrase, and fondly calling attention to every beautiful thought or expression. Each important word was shown in all its principal connections and uses, and illustrative questions put to some of us on the spot. The expression that would be used by a Roman must be met by that which would

be used by an Englishman, to the exclusion of doggerel literalism, or sweeping circumlocution for evasion of difficulty. So also when the exercise was translation of English into Latin—‘version writing.’ For example, ‘He showed himself grateful ; he showed me the way ; he showed bravery ; he showed mercy’ : different words with their own constructions are wanted for ‘showed.’ So, ‘According to his command ; according to other accounts ; according to their usual custom ; according to the fables ; according to his deserts ; according to their different dispositions.’ ‘He ventured through the fleet ; he ventured into the city.’ ‘He died of a disease.’ ‘Not to mention’ ; ‘I rather think’ ; ‘I am all the better for it’ ; ‘Often at war with each other’ ; ‘It is forty years since I began’ ; ‘It will not be very difficult.’ We kept a ‘phrase book’ and an ‘idiom book.’

There was half-holiday on Wednesday and Saturday. To prepare for Monday a part of Buchanan’s *Psalms* was prescribed, or, later in the session, we were given a version on some sacred subject. Tuesday was a sort of minor day in versions. When the correct Latin had been dictated the better scholars were sent among the rest to explain their errors. Friday was the great day of the week. If one finished his version

quickly he would take it up to be examined. But all were taken home by the doctor, and the order of merit announced on Saturday. This was determined by the paucity of errors, but in the case of a tie an excellency might be found to turn the balance. Every error had a class to which it belonged, as a *maximus*, *medius*, or *minimus* (*maxie*, *midie*, *minie*), counting four, two, one. *Sine errore* (without an error) was the highest mark. The version abounded in artfully hidden tests of how we had profited by the week's education.

The class-room was oblong, with the doctor's desk in a corner at one end. Facing him were the benches with bookboards, endwise against the wall on either side, with a passage down the middle. They were called 'factions,' possibly because there was a sort of party spirit or rivalry between them. A move within a faction was not to be compared with a move into another. Each held four of us. We had a specimen of trochaic measure in the elegant lines:—

Quis loupavit factions,
Solve doon a saxpence.

On the one side sat the fifth class and on the other the fourth. They were taught as one, but, for example, in a piece for translation into either

language, the portion for the fourth was only about three-quarters of the whole, and in all things they were treated as less advanced. It was a boon for them to hear the teaching of the fifth. On Saturday we took the places assigned to us for a week by the Friday version. Once I found myself side by side with an embarrassing rogue. I dare say boys still can cut paper in a way to fix it up as a small rectangular box. One morning during prayer my neighbour nudged me to look at a performance of his on the bookboard. A little box was moving along drawn by a pair of flies harnessed with thread, while, from within, the heads of passenger flies were peering through windows cut on either side. The doctor had contrived to see that my lips were not quite serious, and when he ended I was called up and admonished.

When I went to Aberdeen it was just a year after the Disruption. The dissentients had hitherto been known among us as non-intrusionists (or 'nons'). The whole land had rung with the controversy. Yet now at home we saw no more of it than a neighbour driving quietly away in his gig on Sunday morning to a distant Free church. But in the city the chasm yawned wide and deep. Between the Churches there was the contrast of

the desolation of winter with the life and freshness of spring. On Sunday it was thrust upon you in the streets and in the churches. People poured into the Free churches, and dribbled into the Parish churches. In the former everything had the dew of its youth, pleasing the eye and warming the imagination. The fine blue of their cloth (ours was red) had not yet paled, nor had anything suffered from usage. People filled the pews with their presence, and the building with the voice of praise. The attraction for the young was all on that side. Living in the same house as my uncle I went with him to 'The Free East,' where the ministrations of Dr. Foote and his youthful colleague, Macphail, were very profitable. The Churches were obnoxious to each other, and the ill-feeling cut deep into public and private life. Having seen the Church of Scotland as it was then, and seeing it now, I cannot but think that the word had gone out, 'Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it' (Isaiah lxxv. 8). So also, looking at the history of those that went out from it, one may recall the test applied to a new movement by Gamaliel (Acts v.), and may say, Have they not had the blessing of God? It is a great pleasure and full of promise to see the Churches now making these acknowledgments to each other.

From the Grammar School I went to King's College, Old Aberdeen, principally because I should have as a fellow-lodger an older student whom my father trusted. I sat the bursary competition in vain. The school at Old Aberdeen would have been a better line of approach there. This session left no particular mark on me. One thing, however, I remember. The professors and their classes were all assembled in the public hall. Whether this was for the special purpose of giving a demonstration of the effects of 'laughing gas' (nitrous oxide) I know not, but volunteers were invited to come and receive it. Their performances, of every variety, were ridiculously funny. Some became pugnacious. One big Highlander squared his arms to the professors, calling upon one of them by his nickname to come on. Most of us laughed without gas.

Before the next session I was offered a bursary at Marischal College for four years. Accordingly my University course, which began with session 1845-6, was taken at Marischal College and University, Aberdeen. (King's College was also a University. The two were united in 1860 as the University of Aberdeen.) Every day entering its portals we passed underneath the defiant motto of the Earls Marischal: 'Thay haif said.

Quhat say thay. Lat thame say.' The foundation of the College and University was approved by the General Assembly at Dundee on 26th April 1593. The buildings were new in my day.

The foundation stone was laid on 18th October 1837 by the Duke of Richmond. A brass plate deposited in it bears an inscription in Latin which says *inter alia* that the buildings, long insufficient, were now ruinous. The ceremony lasted one hour, during which the clock ran out and had to be started again. A large company (which included only one of the King's College professors, Dr. Jack) sat down to dinner in the County Hall at five o'clock. Forty-three toasts were drunk! The new buildings, gradually taking the place of the old, had been completed two or three years before I entered, at a cost of about £30,000. They were beautiful in grey granite, and looked imperishable.

At both universities the students in Arts wore a scarlet gown. Ere the four years were over not much of it remained. Curtailed, tattered, ink-spattered, it was a thing to be proud of. We of Marischal had the honour of a velvet collar; they of King's had not this, but wore a trencher. Now united, all have the velvet, and all the trencher—a neat little lesson in union. I hear that since woman came on the academic scene, some small

embellishments have found a place on the gown, which have brought upon it the dislike of the men. I hope the gown may have more days before it than it has behind it. I find that my successive guardian angels have actually preserved to this day so much of mine as may show what it had been, or might have been !

In the earlier part of the first session I was six weeks absent by typhus fever, besides being weakened for the rest of the session. Science had not then recognised that two different diseases were included under the word typhus. When some years later this was established, the two were called typhus and typhoid. I believe my illness was typhoid. In our two subjects of that session, Latin and Greek, I had the second and third prizes respectively.

In the latter part of that session I and my brother James—two years younger and attending the Grammar School—had the unspeakable anguish of being summoned to our mother's deathbed from that fever. Battling with it she did not know us. ' Give the gentlemen a seat,' she said. I have never again known such misery. She entered into rest on the 25th February 1846—a wise and lovable mother. I seem to hear a voice, as if the voice of old, saying, ' Write, Blessed are the dead which

die in the Lord from henceforth : Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours ; and their works do follow them.'

When the most devoted stand around looking on their beloved, sorrowing most of all that they can give no help ; and the call comes, and there settles on the poor panting body, weary of the fight, the peace and stillness of death ; and deep silence descends on the chamber—then is felt as at no other time or place what the solemnity of living and of dying is. The pale and fixed and placid features speak of a warfare accomplished, a past that is sealed up and has given place to a future where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' We hardly wonder, deeply as it affects us, when we read that Christians, robust in piety and skilful in the adaptation of choice words of Scripture, have even at the moment of their bereavement raised their song of praise in the striking words of Psalm cvii. 29, 30.¹

¹ The storm is changed into a calm
At His command and will ;
So that the waves, which rag'd before,
Now quiet are and still.
Then are they glad, because at rest,
And quiet now they be ;
So to the haven He them brings
Which they desired to see.

When the father of Principal Cairns died (1841) in the midst of

When I went home at the close of the session the house was full of the fever, and was shunned. Only an old woman could be got to come to us, and so I gave myself to nursing. That pestilence carried off my third sister, a fine young woman, just entered on her twentieth year, a girl cousin about the same age, and my mother's aged mother. I took ill again, and struggled through with very little life remaining. When at last I could feebly step not many yards to the point of view, I remember vividly how affecting was my first sight of the beauty of the green fields ; but a sight never seen before was also there—a blighted field. This year was the first of the great and mysterious calamity, the potato disease. It descended on the fields almost simultaneously from end to end of the country. On Ireland it brought famine and misery.

In my second session I was again, in the earlier part of it, absent for six weeks, from an all but fatal attack of erysipelas beginning in the head.

his family, his widow gave out these verses and herself led the singing. When the wife of Mr. Lind, United Presbyterian minister near New Deer, died (1861) he gathered around the dead all who were in the house, and they sang the verses. It is interesting that Carlyle writing of the death of Cromwell and the grief of Mary, his daughter, thus apostrophises her, 'Husht, poor weeping Mary! Here is a life-battle right nobly done. Seest thou not The storm is changed' (quoting the verses).

Unconscious for days and days, one thing only was I aware of—the excruciating experience of the barber’s razor. Most terrible things I saw and heard in my delirium. As I afterwards learned, some things I must have dreamed in silence and remembered; others I cried aloud, to the horror of the nurses, but remembered not. As soon as possible I returned to the classes, under cover of a wig, and in much weakness. What cruelty may come of ignorance and thoughtlessness! There was in the College buildings a long stone stair running through below the upper stories down to the back. Both down and up, it sorely tried my feeble knees. Only those who have come out of a serious illness know what this peculiar and painful weakness is. Two fellows conspired to give me what they called a run on it; and, seizing me right and left, they rushed me down. I cannot tell whether the mental or physical distress was the greatest. Next day they were approaching me with the same intent, when, getting my back to the wall and, nerved for the moment with burning indignation and determined will, I dealt each of them a blow that sent him reeling. Public sympathy was with me, and so ended that lesson.

When I went home at the close of this session,

with my brother at the close of his first, father was meeting the coach to receive us. There had not been time to inform him of the prize list, and his first question was, who was first in mathematics. When he learned that I was first, I can still hear him say in a broken voice, ‘*They*’re awa that that would have pleased.’ Many a son many a time has felt thus when he has thought of his departed mother, and all that she had been to him. I may tell a curious surprise that the second prizeman gave me. Asked by him if I had done the original geometrical problem set for us, I said I had, and had even appended a corollary to it ; whereupon he gravely informed me that he had proved it could not be done !

During the third and fourth sessions I made full attendance, and again with gratifying results. I find I still have the three essays given in to the Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic, Professor Martin, on prescribed subjects : ‘The Authority of Common Sense,’ ‘Materialism,’ ‘The Utility of Logic.’ Of the judgments appended to them I may give the last : ‘This, like all Mr. Wm. Mair’s exercises, shows ability, care, and attention to the subject.’ Once, to my surprise, a passage was read out by him to the class. I graduated M.A. with honours, 6th April 1849.

Between the third and fourth sessions I had studied mathematics without a teacher (indeed at no time had I any but the professor), and at the beginning of the fourth had won the Gray mathematical prize of £30 for two years. The Simpson was then at King's College. The Boxill, a one-year prize, came into the field for the first time the year before, when it only gave £18. This year it was not offered. The prize that I got required two additional sessions of mathematical study, and I gave attendance on the professor during my fourth session, and again during my first at the Divinity Hall. Of that study I remember two things: calculating the next eclipse of the sun, and taking, rather nervously, from the observatory of the University an observation of the transit of some heavenly body.

At our competition the candidates were locked into a room together for a number of hours on a Friday and a Saturday, with leave to send the janitor for food. I need say nothing of the mental mixture of problems and duty in church next day. Four of us competed. By far my strongest rival was A. B. Davidson, who became the distinguished Professor of Hebrew in the New College (*i.e.* Divinity Hall of the now United Free Church), Edinburgh. There came to be a curious parallelism

between us. We were born only three or four miles from each other (as the crow flies), and we ran neck and neck through the Arts curriculum, graduating on the same day. Years passed by. I was presented with my portrait painted by Sir George Reid ; next year so was Dr. Davidson. Lastly, we were in one year offered the Moderator's chair in our respective General Assemblies. Davidson was licensed a probationer in 1856, and it must have been within a year or two that (while I was invalided, as will be seen), we for-gathered on a public road near the homes of our fathers. I found him reading a printer's proof of the beginning of his *Commentary on Job*. 'Ah,' said I, 'on the straight road to a chair now !' 'I'll never get a kirk,' he answered, 'and therefore can't get a chair.' I cheered him on, making the confident and safe prediction that, 'kirk or no kirk,' he would soon be in a chair. Before the session of 1858 he was appointed assistant to the Professor of Hebrew.

Of my professors I can recall next to nothing that has much claim to be noted. Strange as it may seem, the two with whom I had most affinity were completely the opposites of each other—Professor Blackie in the chair of Humanity (*i.e.* for

the study of the Latin language and literature), and Professor Cruickshank in the chair of Mathematics. It is now one hundred and two years since the birth of Professor Blackie. He was the only picturesque figure and character on the staff—known far and wide with his flowing locks and soft hat, his shepherd tartan plaid and sturdy walking-stick (which he called his ‘kail-runt’), and with a gait to correspond, yet of no little dignity. He had a fine outspoken frankness. He saw no harm in snowballing, only it broke the rules, and we must not let him see it. I got my first impression of natural, hearty, eloquent speaking from bursts of it in him. At the close of our second session he did a nice thing on my account. Most of my scanty strength had gone to mathematics (which he professed to abhor), and I had dropped in Latin to be only next to the prizemen. When, in the presence of some visitors, he was reading out the meritorious and came to my name, he said: ‘A good boy; I am sorry he has not kept up. But when I heard he had taken up with Dr. Cruickshank, I knew it was all over with him!’ And then he handed me Heber’s *Palestine and other Poems*, on which he had written: ‘Optimo puero humaniorum literarum studiosissimo huncce libellum dedit Joannes S. Blackie *μνήμης ἔνεκα*.’ (To

a very good boy, a most diligent student of the Latin language and literature, John S. Blackie gave this little book as a keepsake.)

With Dr. Cruickshank I was naturally in closer intercourse than with any other. His was a staid, professorial bearing, but very unpretentious. He was a man of few and accurate words deliberately spoken. Every step in a problem he explained with a simplicity that could not be excelled. Even his occasional jokes or reproofs were made more effective by the explanatory manner which he threw into them. When a student for a sensation blew his nose like the horn of a mail coach, the professor, with some severity, but precisely in the attitude and manner of explaining something, said: 'That means, Take notice: I have got a nose, and it is in want of wiping.' 'Draw a line from the point C,' a student would say, and the professor, putting his chalk to C, would, with the utmost gravity, draw a line in the most absurd direction, not even 'a straight line.' Once when a piece of chalk was rather given to crumbling he looked round from the board, saying, with half a smile, 'If it were not friable, it would be of no use for our purpose.'

A valued memory of that time is the acquaintance I made with Butler's *Analogy* under the

teaching of Professor Martin of the Moral Philosophy chair, who had a class on Sunday morning for the purpose—a fine training in solid, profitable thinking.

If I have any correctness of discernment—or any wholesome dislike—of irrelevancy, inexactness of expression, obscurity, vagueness, ambiguity, and the like, I believe that, so far as it is due to early training, I got it under Melvin and Cruickshank, with Butler thrown in.

Another professor I had who is better known to science, and of more enduring fame than any of the rest, William MacGillivray, M.A., LL.D., author of *A History of British Birds* and other standard works in natural science. He was Professor of Natural History. This class was in our second year. Its subjects were zoology, geology, and botany. The professor was rather below middle stature, erect and firm of step. In excursions with his students he could walk the strongest of them done, and remain as fresh as ever. ‘Keep your knees bent,’ he would say, ‘as you climb a mountain; and so avoid having to raise your body at every step.’ He was intensely devoted to his studies, and indeed must have shortened his life—which closed at fifty-six—by the exposures he incurred in the prosecution of

them. There was reality and earnestness in all that he did. His lectures were carefully written, and he dictated an epitome of them to us every week. In this class we learned the importance of careful discriminating observation. Professor MacGillivray was modest, patient, and gentle, unwilling to say an angry word, considerate and kindly to his students. The works of nature he regarded as the work of God. 'Let us humble ourselves,' he has written, 'that in contemplating God's works we may ever see Him in the midst of them.' In autumn on Deeside he says of the woods: 'Winter will again strip them of their vesture, but they will "hear the voice of Spring and flourish green again."' So shall we whose life is in Christ.' In the conclusion of the fifth and last volume of *British Birds* he says: 'If I have not very frequently indulged in reflections on the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, as suggested by even my imperfect understanding of His wonderful works, it is not because I have not ever been sensible of the relation between the Creator and His creatures, nor because my chief enjoyment, when wandering among the hills and valleys, exploring the rugged shores of the ocean, or searching the cultivated fields, has not been in a sense of His presence. "To Him who alone doeth great

wonders " be all glory and praise. Reader, farewell.' But he never paraded piety.

In 1900 his relatives, surviving students, and others desirous to do him honour as a man and a naturalist—with me as chairman of their committee, and Rev. Dr. Farquharson, Selkirk, secretary—erected a monument at the professor's grave in the Calton Cemetery, and placed a mural tablet in a conspicuous position in the University Museum at Marischal College. The inscription is the same in both ; and both are fine works of art beautifully designed and executed.

In those days at Aberdeen a necessary preliminary to graduation was the following oath, administered to us all at once in Latin before proceeding to the graduation hall: 'I take Almighty God to witness that I profess the pure Christian religion, abhor the tyranny of the Pope of Rome, and detest all Roman heresies. Further, I solemnly promise that to this seat of learning to which I owe the cultivation of my faculties, I will in return show favour so far as in my power.'

The graduation¹ took place on 6th April 1849. The

¹ From *gradus*, a degree or step. The 'capping' is one of the most ancient of university symbolic rites. In this case it manifestly conveys the right to wear the cap which is the sign of Master.

janitor, worthy John Colvin, borrowed ministers' gowns for us to be presented in. The visible conclusive act was our being dabbed on the head by the Principal with a handful of black velvet supposed to be (and no doubt being) a cap. My diploma was signed by twelve members of the senatus. I have my father's, given him by the same University in 1818 at the age of twenty-two. It was signed by nine professors. Both are on vellum (dressed calfskin), his written by his own hand beautifully, mine lithographed, and its vellum much the more highly dressed.¹

On receiving my degree I was asked by Dr.

¹ The following translation may interest. The older diploma was substantially the same; and the last, the commendatory, sentence was in the same words. The present one differs considerably from both in language :—

TO ALL AND SUNDRY WHOM IT CONCERNS GREETING.

We, Dean of Faculty, Principal and Professors in Marischal University, Aberdeen, sincerely testify that the well-conducted and ingenuous youth, WILLIAM MAIR, has successfully applied himself to studies in philosophy and literature for four years with us, and after a complete curriculum of studies has fully approved himself to the Principal and the examining Professors of Arts and Languages and has deservedly gained the degree of Master in the Liberal Arts. Wherefore we earnestly commend him to all favourers of good morals and liberal science that they may count him worthy of brotherly welcome and kindly furtherance; which favour we as occasion offers will gladly repay who hereby confirm this Diploma with our signatures and the public seal of the University.

Cruikshank if I would accept the assistantship in Dyke Academy. This was the parish school of Dyke, just across the Findhorn from Forres, to which the schoolmaster, William Ogilvie, a cultured and successful educationist, had added a higher department, and received boarders from far and near. There I worked till the harvest vacation, after which the mathematical prize and the Divinity Hall took me back to the University. My predecessor at Dyke had been George Ogilvie, who became eminent as head of George Watson's College, Edinburgh. Though of the same name, these Ogilvies were not kinsmen.

I may recall my journeys to and from Dyke. At six o'clock of the morning, in Union Street, Aberdeen, I took my seat on the outside of the Inverness coach—four-in-hand—for my drive of eighty miles. Hardly had I done so when unexpected drops of rain were felt. This was the prelude to a bitter tempest of wind and rain and sleet and snow. We cowered and shivered and huddled together. If there was any scenery to see, we saw it not. By the time we got to the hills of Foudland and were some thirty miles from Aberdeen, though the storm had abated, in parts of the road snow 'filled the dykes,' and a way had to be dug for us. Having surmounted the heights

and difficulties, passed Huntly, and run the eight miles between Keith and Fochabers, the latter half of which is a delightful descent, we found genial Morayshire with scarce a symptom of our troubles.

When the time came for leaving Dyke I went on to Inverness, saw its sights, felt its hotel bills, and proceeded down the Caledonian Canal. As we came through Loch Ness the boat was 'laid to,' that those who wished might go to see the Fall of Foyers—a fall of ninety feet, one of the finest cascades in Britain. Years afterwards, my wife with me, we had got near that scene, with a party of Americans at our heels. These shouted to a similar party who were returning, 'Wal, and what is it like?' and were answered, 'Wal, I guess as haow there's plenty of room for the water *when it comes!*' Proceeding on my journey, at the appropriate place, among sea waves, I took my first lesson in sea-sickness; and, as we came up the Clyde, had my first sight of a railway train, running down the left bank of the river. One thing in Glasgow surprised and disappointed me. Accustomed in Aberdeen to the white, new, clean look of the granite, which neither absorbs a drop of rain nor grows a fungus, I was struck by the duskiness of even the newest parts of

Glasgow. After paying due respect to that city I set forth northwards by railway.

The year of my birth saw also the birth of railway travelling. The first train ran at the opening of the line between Liverpool and Manchester on the 15th September 1830—an historic occasion. From that time began railway building in breathless—sometimes ruinous—haste. Scarcely twenty years of such enterprise and of my life had passed when I could continue my homeward journey by rail almost to Montrose. Then a coach took up the running.

Certain other things come to mind which had their beginnings in my boyhood. I was eight years old before photographers could take portraits, even by the daguerreotype process. I was ten before we got penny postage. But for years we were dependent on the penknife and scissors for separating the stamps; it was not till February 1854 that perforated sheets were issued to the public.¹ Only near the end of my schooldays did one solitary steel pen make its appearance among us, and it had little to say for itself. We were taught with quills, and before every writing lesson

¹ Particulars regarding the invention and introduction of the machine used, and the present practice, with mention of what is done in the United States Bureau of Engraving and Printing, are given in *Notes and Queries*, 11th March 1911.

we presented our pens to the master that he might mend them if necessary; so also, if making bad work during the lesson, we appealed to the master against the pen.

I had never thought of any other life-work than the ministry, and I had thought of it early. How this should have been I cannot tell. A question of great interest with many is, when and how one became a Christian. This also in my own case I cannot tell. So far back as I have ever been able to remember, I believe my prayers had in them what I know to be the essentials of Christian prayer; and I tried to live accordingly. I think that in these things we can but see the quickening and teaching of the Holy Spirit. The life thus given must thus also have been preserved and nurtured. It would grow after the manner of all life, but, I fear, slowly and unsteadily, and it learned to feed on the truths of Scripture.

My Hall course consisted of three 'full sessions' and one 'partial.' It was uneventful, unless I must reckon the extraordinary commendation which the professors were pleased to bestow on my discourses, and which has had no small effect in keeping me up, and in aiding the sense of responsibility. That which is now an essay in

English was then an exegesis in Latin (the prayer which preceded it being also in Latin) on some subject in Biblical theology. My subject was: *Sitne credibile Deum facere posse miracula?* (Is it credible that God can work miracles?) Of this discourse, and also of my lecture on the parable of the Talents (Matthew xxv.), both as to their matter and ‘eloquence,’ Professor Pirie used language which could hardly be exceeded. One thing he said of the lecture which has influenced me ever since—that I had known what to say and what not to say. Professor Macpherson, in the following session, after hearing at the interval of a month my Greek and Hebrew critical discourses, held them up to the class as ‘models of what such discourses ought to be,’ so that I even felt afraid to look up; and he went on to advise me of the importance of prosecuting critical study with the rare talent that had been given me. As we shall see, God willed it otherwise.

Between my second and third sessions at the Divinity Hall, in the summer of 1851, I visited, along with two schoolmasters of my acquaintance, the first International Exhibition, held in the Crystal Palace, erected for that purpose in Hyde Park. This new thing in the world’s history—the conception of ‘Albert the Good,’ the Prince

Consort—was designed to draw the nations together in amity, and it made an excellent impression. In our own land it excited an interest quite different from, and incomparably greater than any subsequent exhibition has done. It was not dominated by the commercial spirit. None who saw it can forget the wonderful spectacle. One item among hundreds may serve to show how far we have come since then. Our familiar and indispensable servant and friend, now a giant, then a child of five, the electric telegraph, was a marvel to most people, and there was always a gathering at the place where one might enjoy the sensation of sending a message to the other side of the exhibition and receiving its answer ere it had hardly left his lips.

I was secretary to the University Missionary Association, and this required of me occasional little speeches at the meetings ; but alas, for both speaker and hearer ! At the commencement of next session, however, I rose and, to my infinite surprise, spoke with the comfort and fluency of an old hand. I had no relapse ! Possibly the curious experience may not be uncommon. Even the bicyclist after much humiliating failure may set off in a moment with flying colours. As secretary

it fell to me to request Dr. Caird to preach our annual sermon. He declined on account of many engagements. He was then at Errol, Perthshire, and it has always been told that, like all orators in like case, he was oppressed by a house too large for the audience, and proposed a partition to cut part of it off. This did not commend itself to all, however, and was disapproved by the beadle on the ground that there might come 'a popular minister that would fill the kirk.' I never saw Dr. Caird in the pulpit.

In addition to my Divinity studies I engaged in private tuition of students, and one year I acted also for the teacher who was in charge of the summer Greek class in the University. Later I served as missionary in the West Parish (Dr. Forsyth, minister). The worst parts of the city were not there, but yet there was not a little of human life in depths that could hardly be deeper. Even now I can feel the sadness of that sad day when I was hurried off the street to speak with a young woman who was ill with sore throat, and had just been told by the doctor, at his first visit, that she had not twelve hours to live.

It would be about this time that on an accidental summer holiday I took a jaunt up Deeside. On the north bank of the river looking across to

Lochnagar, proudly pre-eminent over all around—which Professor MacGillivray says, ‘has more dignity than any of our hills except Ben Nevis’—there lived a blacksmith in a hut with a small smithy. His own original dimensions had evidently become diminished by years. He was grimy and cynical. He kept a boat with which he would take a traveller to the other side. I found him at dinner, and sat and conversed till he was ready. I said, ‘You’ll have lots of visitors to see Lochnagar.’ ‘Oh ay,’ he said, ‘I’ve lived here for forty years, and never had a fit on’t. There’s ae thing I observe: when they’ve seen’t ance they *never come back!*’ Byron had sung of it, concluding with:—

Oh for the crags that are wild and majestic!
The steep frowning glories of dark Lochnagar.

On that day I had, at no great distance, my first view of Balmoral Castle—no infant more innocent of the thought that any honour awaited me there.

By the time I reached my last, and partial, session father had retired to Mains of Coldwells—a farm of two hundred acres of which he had a lease, in the Ellon part of the parish. He had taken this farm some years before to be a home for our mother if he should fall. My brother

James was now in the school. While he went to Glasgow for a full Divinity session, I took my partial session and the charge of his school. Before I left it the annual examination by the presbytery took place, and unasked they sent me a certificate of their great satisfaction. On my brother's horse I rode twice to Aberdeen, twenty-three miles distant, to deliver my critical discourses (enough for a partial session). An event in this connection is thus referred to in the introduction to my closing address to the General Assembly of 1897: 'Bear with me if for a moment I glance back to an evening in the life of a student of Divinity known to me forty-four years ago. His discourses on texts from the Hebrew and Greek had been under review, and he had been surprised and covered with confusion by the kindness of the professor's words and the course which he counselled for the future. As he journeyed that night from the halls of the University to his distant home in the country, alone in wintry darkness, he bowed himself on his horse's neck, and anew gave up every talent he had received to his God and Saviour, to be used in any way, in any place, at any time, in strength or in weakness, as God should appoint. The grace which moved to that dedication kept

him to it. It was never revoked, never regretted nor departed from. . . . After so long a time, by means of your favour, the spirit of that night is as fresh upon him as then, with a deeper sense of opportunity and, if possible, a deeper sense of obligation to serve.'

In the Divinity Hall we had classes at both Universities. In each there was a chair of Divinity occupied by a professor of much more than local fame—one nearing the close of his labours, the other in mid career. At King's College Dr. Duncan Mearns had already held office for thirty-three years, and now his able lectures were read by another—nothing to their advantage. I remember well the impressiveness of the venerable professor's grave voice and strong features rugged with the lines of years and thought. As teacher and author he had been a power in Scottish theology. During my time the chair passed to Dr. Robert Macpherson, minister at Forres.

At Marischal College was Dr. (afterwards Principal) Pirie. His lectures were vigorous and stimulating. An independent thinker himself, he would say to his students, 'Think this out for yourselves.' He took pleasure in a discussion. I think of two subjects into which he led me in

his study—perhaps just to plume my wings—conscience, and the effect of a full house on a speaker. This effect, he argued, was gratified vanity. His criticism of discourses was blunt and straightforward; and in oral examination, if the student was not careful, he would soon find himself out of his depth, and ‘beginning to sink.’ Dr. Pirie published on a number of subjects, including church questions, metaphysics, and theology; but he was best known as a prominent churchman, and for many years the leader of the General Assembly. For this he was well fitted by his power of ready and effective debate and shrewd common sense. Of not more than middle stature, the Principal had a large round head and round face with full eyes, and wore spectacles, which he would put up on his brow for convenience. His speech had a tendency to be slap-dash, and had the Aberdeen modulation which gave it additional interest and even effectiveness. When speaking in a debate he seemed to be immensely enjoying it. He set his heart on the abolition of patronage, which came to pass in 1874, by an Act passed twelve days before he reached threescore and ten.

Two things I did as a student which, so far as I know, were not done by others. From experi-

ence in the pew long before I was a student I had resolved that, if ever I was a preacher, I would use simple speech, easily followed ; and in educating myself to this, among various exercises, I took published sermons and the like, and re-expressed them more simply. The other thing was to teach myself to speak, giving to this as thorough and faithful application as to any other subject of study, with the addition of the sharp-eared unsparing self-criticism which it always requires. Not a little of what I did may be seen directly or indirectly in my book, *Speaking*. It is not mentioned there, however, that among my highest exercises I read the whole of *Paradise Lost* in the open air as if to a multitude, never quitting a passage till I had spoken even the most complex sentence easily with natural modulation, so valuable in conveying the full sense with pleasure to the hearer. All this was entirely with a view to the pulpit—the highest service. Yet when after many years I had the undreamt-of honour to read an Address of the General Assembly to Queen Victoria, it was no small secondary reward to be told by a lady-in-waiting (Lady Lytton) that it had been beautifully read. This may be encouragement to others, for I think it good testimony to the value of determined

self-training, and rejection of all that is ordinarily meant by 'elocution.'

It was now the spring of 1853, and my studies had in view the 'trials' for licence. At last the day came. Examinations by the presbytery of Aberdeen were always very real. My examiner on Ecclesiastical History had set a paper abounding in out-of-the-way, or paltry, minutiae such as one student might use for puzzling another, or even a periodical might offer a prize on. Finding that my reply paper made but a poor show, I ventured in my simplicity to append a note in which I offered to sit another examination to test my knowledge of Ecclesiastical History. While I was awaiting results in the ante-room, Dr. Forsyth passed through, and, chuckling over that examiner, told me I was to be rebuked. And rebuked I was! On the other hand, the examiner in Hebrew (Dr. William Paul, Banchory-Devenick) took a chance to bring me the paper I had written, and, pointing to something, said: 'But for that slip your paper would have been perfect.' On that day, the 5th July 1853, I was licensed to preach the Gospel, and was appointed to preach next Lord's Day in Old Machar Cathedral, Old Aberdeen. King's College professors worshipped there. But that can scarcely affect a preacher, if he has

prepared to speak in the name and in the presence of a greater than they. Unknown to me, my father was there behind a pillar. This was the first time I had opened my mouth in public worship, except to sing sitting in the pew. In those days no man would dream of anything else before licence, nor would any minister allow it.

A few weeks after being licensed I was asked by Dr. M'Taggart, Greyfriars Church (the church for Marischal College)—whose ministrations were singularly illuminative in spiritual truth, and charmingly simple and earnest—if I would go to be the assistant of his old friend Dr. Paterson, Montrose. Doubting my sufficiency and distrusting my own judgment I took his advice, accepted an invitation to preach, as others had done, and was appointed.

Dr. Paterson had been a tutor of Lord Byron's, acting for some time in place of his brother. Byron's mother, a Gordon, and heiress of Gight, Aberdeenshire—her heritage and other means squandered by her husband—came to Aberdeen in 1790 with the little lame boy not yet three years old. Byron tells that he began Ruddiman's Grammar with a tutor named Paterson, 'a very serious, saturnine, but kind young man, and a good scholar.' This would be said of my

Paterson's brother, but has been thought to fit himself also well enough.

When the doctor was inducted at Montrose in 1811 as Mr. Joseph Paterson, he was, he said, a tall, pale, flat-chested young man, and it was almost taken for granted that he would soon be carried off by the consumption that had played havoc with his kinsfolk. Yet by taking great and resolute care he was now seventy-four, and lived to be ninety-two, active all the time. He last preached exactly six weeks before the day of his death, 24th April 1871. His speaking was very distinct, in a strong clear voice, which was almost unaffected by age. He told me that in conversation with a woman whose hearing was not good the preaching of some one had been referred to, and she said, 'Oh, ay, but there's nane I like to hear like yoursel, doctor; it jist gangs in at the tae lug and oot at the tither.' 'Owre mony o' your kind, Jenny,' said the doctor. At the presentation of his portrait he struck a fine note when he said, with tenderness: 'Since I came to Montrose a new generation has arisen, but it cannot be said that they "knew not Joseph."'

I have never—unless it was when giving the closing address in the crowded Assembly Hall—spoken in circumstances more fitted to bring one

to his best than when this large church of Montrose, with its gallery upon gallery, was lighted up in the evening and full from floor to ceiling. But health immediately began to fail me from some cause in the region of the digestion. After a few months Dr. Kilgour made an exhaustive examination of me by palpation and otherwise, and with much sympathy, but conclusively, informed me that I was not fit for any work. 'I heard the voice of Jesus say . . . Lay down, thou weary one, lay down thy head upon My breast.'

CHAPTER II

SEVEN YEARS OFF THE FIELD

THUS began a period of retirement which was to last almost seven full years, and during the greater part of which it was supposed by all, including myself, that I could not recover. Natural longing drew me to the old home at the school where the warm welcome of my brother awaited me. There I stayed till he gave up teaching for employment and study in preparation for the ministry—perhaps a year—after which I went to my father's. It may seem strange, but what or when was to be the issue of my illness had no place in my thoughts. At first I was simply filled to overflow with the delicious feeling of rest—rest. It was new to me. Body and mind rested as they had never done before. Soul and spirit rested as they had done before, and with still more lively consciousness, on the wisdom and love of God in Christ. When the stage of enjoying rest was over, I should have felt unhappy, disappointed, perhaps discontented, if there had

been in my thoughts some worldly or ecclesiastical ladder to climb, or some plan of life to be worked out. But there never was. It had been my habit of life to hold myself at the call of the Heavenly Father, to do His bidding, occupied in trying to discharge present duty. This I took, and still take, to be the teaching of Scripture; and so I said in humility and peace: 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.'

By and by I was taken for a change to Ballater. Only one thing of that month I have always remembered, but have never, I think, told it till now. One day in my lonely, weakly walk I fell for a small moment into low spirits about ways and means. Just then something on the path before me caught my eye. It was only a halfpenny; but that halfpenny rebuked me, and started thoughts that restored me.

After two years the rest and refreshing, without increasing my strength, had enlivened it, making me feel perhaps as if stronger than I was. At any rate I thought I must try to make use of it, so far as it would go. A maxim with me had been, as it still is, that power is duty to its last particle. I am afraid I had heretofore been often going beyond that particle. My first outing was a visit to my friend Mr. Riach at Pencaitland Manse,

and while there I was got hold of in an emergency to supply a vacant diet in St. Stephen's, Edinburgh. A day or two afterwards I was offered the assistantship ; but this, of course, was impossible for me. Through Mr. Riach I got an easy assistantship in the country ; and, in short, during 1855 and 1856 I acted for short periods as *locum tenens* or assistant in four parishes. From the last two of them I had to retire on account of my health.

In one of those parishes unsoundness of mind was rapidly coming over the minister. I lived in the manse, and we were thankful that he had unbounded confidence in me, for thus it was that in many an extreme moment he was calmed and guided. But the pathos of life in that house, felt by all, and visible on the countenance of the afflicted wife, was very great, and could not but leave some mark upon us. The manner of his leaving the manse was touching and strange. I had been called about midnight, and was alone with him in his room. We were speaking of his wife. He believed himself to be in very poor health, and on a remark of mine about her anxiety on his account he leaped to the idea that I had cleverly discovered that her reason had given way, saying it had been his own opinion, and he would to-morrow take her to the asylum. I counselled waiting a day, and

we fixed the time. This took hold of him, and they travelled unattended—a three hours' journey by road and rail—he as her guardian. In a few weeks came hæmorrhage in the brain, bringing peace and rest. I seem to have been oftener brought close to persons so afflicted than is common.

The other three parishes were Cruden, Duffus, and Campsie. When I was at Campsie Dr. Norman Macleod proposed that I should go to our Jewish Mission station at Smyrna, where nothing would be asked of me for a year but to superintend. I would willingly have gone, having only the wish to know what work was appointed for me by Him who had the right, but Dr. Kilgour said I should require some one to take care of me !

To try a winter in Lisbon, in the autumn of 1857 (the year of the Indian Mutiny), I accompanied Mr. James Gray, son of the minister of Rothes, who was obliged by a weak chest to live there. The boat in which we sailed narrowly escaped shipwreck. At the mouth of the Mersey we were run into by a large vessel, and put back to Liverpool as best we could. I was ill enough and resigned enough to be indifferent, and slept. While waiting in Liverpool we heard an excellent preacher, Mr. Whyte, Islington, on the text, so

suitable for us, 'He careth for you' (1 Peter v.). After some days we sailed again. The Bay of Biscay was rough, and before the voyage ended the captain had expressed to a friend his fear of not being able to put me ashore in life.

When we anchored in the river a friend of Mr. Gray's came in a boat to welcome us and take us ashore. He talked with bated breath and few words of a case of illness which it was feared was yellow fever. So it proved. That fever rushed on the city like an armed man. Our house was on the highway to one of the two cemeteries; and the last sound we heard at night and the first in the morning was the doleful rumble of the hearse. A heavy pall of depression and fear hung over the city. The calamity was spoken of with mysterious air and in despondent tones. Mr. Gray brought up word, from the once busiest places, of nothing but shut shops and desolate houses—the occupants having fled or been swept away. The friend who had come off to receive us, and two who had been the first to call and welcome Mr. Gray home, were taken. We walked from church one Sunday with a fine young Englishman, and in a day or two heard that he was gone. I cannot give the full tale of the victims, but happen to have the statistics from 9th September to 22nd November—11,395

cases, and 3881 deaths. I am thankful to say that Mr. Gray and I were without anxiety for ourselves. Isaiah xxvi.: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee'—to do what is best. About the middle of December we had the only experience I have ever had of an earthquake. Happily it was slight. I was sitting on a couch leaning my back on the end of it which stood against one of the walls in a corner of the room. I was quietly moved a little upwards and forwards and let down again, and saw a corresponding movement of the top of the walls in the corner diagonally opposite to me. When Mr. Gray, whose attention had been preoccupied, came in, I said: 'If you had had a tame elephant stepping about, I should have said he had just now been pushing his way through the passage at my back.' At once he said: 'It must be an earthquake.' Word soon came up from the city that there had been a sharp shock, knocking furniture about and sending people to the streets.

To take leave of the pestilence: the statistics given in the newspapers began to improve, and grew gradually better till at last in spring, some three months after our arrival, the port was proclaimed clean.

I then proceeded to carry out an arrangement which had its origin at the time of my starting for Lisbon, on this wise. I was walking in Union Street, Aberdeen, with Mr. Gray of Holburn Church, when we met Mr. Marshall Lang of the East Church. This is the Gray who became the distinguished Dr. Gray of Auchterless; and this the Lang who became the Very Reverend Dr. Marshall Lang, Principal of Aberdeen University—men admired and beloved. They were alike in two things only, in all else very unlike. Both were above the ordinary stature, and both were unusually large-hearted men, kind and Christian to the core. Mr. Gray introduced me to Mr. Lang in his own warm, outspoken manner, and with the lament that, ‘poor fellow!’ I was just on my way to Lisbon because of my health. Mr. Lang said he knew of something that might be better: a younger brother of his was at Beyrout, where I might be of use as well as be profited by the climate—he would communicate about it. So it came about that from Lisbon I sailed hopefully to Beyrout, arriving in afternoon sunshine under which the beautiful scene became enchanting.

The Mr. Lang who received me—a fine Christian young man—is now Sir Robert Hamilton Lang. His kindness to me can never be forgot. In

Beyrout I was the proud possessor of a donkey to ride—my first and last. When the creature takes to braying the rider feels rather foolish. There, too, I saw the hard fate of the poor silk-worm. Having spent its days in darkness, spinning around it the valuable cocoon, having finished its work as a worm, having attained the fitness and earned the right to come forth on wings and revel in the sunshine, then its own wonderful work was made its tomb that it might be the more valuable to man. The whole was cast into a cauldron of boiling water ; and thereafter the unwinding of the threads began. The climate at that time was delicious, but when the thermometer rose to stand at eighty degrees day and night I had to escape for my life. We may defend ourselves against cold ; against heat we are defenceless. First I went up the mountains, where I made the acquaintance of splendid American missionaries. When sufficiently braced there, I set out for my father's home once more, arriving in August 1858.

On the voyages to and from Beyrout, when the sea was quiet enough for me to be on deck, I met some interesting people. A 'superior person,' in the attire of a clergyman of the Church of England, informed me with the most thinly-veiled disdain that he did not acknowledge me to be a minister

of Christ. Sitting one day beside an American he plied me with questions about myself till I thought I might in fairness have my turn ; and, saying so, I proceeded on practical spiritual lines. This led to conversation, and in the end we exchanged cards. Upwards of a year later I received a letter from him to tell me that the seed had taken root, and that he was a Christian. A young German who was, I think, a student—a healthy, strong fellow—told me he always had only two meals a day. He imagined it was written and accepted Scripture history that the disciples came by night and stole the body of Jesus away. A professor told me the Jews left Palestine because of the exhaustion of its wood supply. One of the sailors and I got into sympathy on the forecastle—a worthy man. He told me of many grievances, and then I said, ‘ Now let us have a look at the other side—our good things.’ And we very soon brought out a large balance in their favour. The other day I lighted on a book of hymns that he gave me as a keepsake.

Letters have been given me written by Mr. Gray to his father. On the 9th October 1853 he writes : ‘ I had a letter from Mr. Mair since his return. The voyage home restored him to his usual state ; only he is weaker and thinner than when he left

me. He says he is contented to come home and die, expecting to be of no farther service in this world, but looking to the things that are eternal.'

I think I have heard observations to the effect that it must be peculiarly trying to face death in youth. This does not seem to be borne out by experience. As for death itself, and what shall follow, the same truths for enlightenment and comfort are equally applicable and sufficient at any age. The difference, therefore, can only be in one's relation to this life; and in that a person in youth would appear to have the advantage. As in my case, one is not likely to have so deep an interest in anything of his own, or of a public nature, in youth as in riper years. At eighty I have an interest which is deeper, and in more important things, than when I was five-and-twenty. In these thoughts we are comparing the effect of the impending end at different periods of life. But since all at every period are under the doom incurably, whether well or ill, we may also compare the effect under all conditions of health. A slow illness at twenty-five, and age at eighty are pretty much the same as regards the imminence of the end. Does one or other of them really differ much in a sound-minded Christian from the ordinary conditions of life? Not in my experience. Neither

at twenty-five did I sit down and wait for the end, nor am I doing it now. Then and now every day had something, however small, to occupy the attention. And this is just the case also with those who are neither ill nor aged. They are, all the time, incurably doomed, and pass away in thousands. Let me then repeat the words for every age and condition : ‘ And now, little children, abide in Him (Christ) ; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming ’ (1 John ii.).

It would be in the early part of next summer (1859) that I and others began to think there were slight indications of returning health to be seen on the countenance. Very, very slowly the thought proved to be well founded. When next ploughing time came I could take my walk by the side of the ploughman, and even take his place between the ‘ stilts ’ (arms of the plough) for a furrow or two. Well do I remember how, after the first experiment, I tingled from shoulder to heel, so comfortably. After about ten months of recovering I felt fit for work. The lady in Campsie with whom I had lodged during my short time there, Mrs. Simpson, Carlton, had kindly kept herself informed of my state, and had mentioned my recovery to Dr.

Munro. Thereupon, in the spring of 1860, he wrote me a kind note inviting me to 'resume' (after four years !) my duties in his parish. Doubting the sufficiency of my untried strength for certain well-remembered parts of those duties, I wrote him accordingly. But his reply was, 'Come, and make the duties anything you like.' Thus it may be said my life's work really began.

I must needs first go into the city for a new outfit. In the only shop that I visited, the head, though a personal friend, did not recognise me till I spoke, and then he broke out, 'My dear William, is it you ! The last time you passed through here I thocht ye was bookit for Gravesend !' Next I could not but show myself to my good friend Dr. Kilgour. He was a man of substantial build, with an honest, sensible face, some bluntness of manner, and a kind heart. His welcome was, 'I'm very glad to see you here again, man.' 'You weren't expecting it, doctor ?' 'No, I was not.' 'What was the matter with me ?' 'It was tubercular peritonitis. What part of the treatment, do you think, did you most good ?' I had had no 'treatment' except at the beginning, and knew of no benefit from it, but I instanced something doubtfully, and he said: 'Perhaps—a desperate cure for a desperate disease; but the fact is,

you have your own good sense to thank for your recovery.'

At this point I have had to make up my mind how far, if at all, to go into particulars about health. Those words of the doctor excite a wish for information, and give some claim to ask for it. Besides, in addition to the desire for fuller knowledge on the subject of health generally, at this very time, against this very ailment the trumpet call is sounding for a universal rally to an implacable war of extirpation ; and at the instance of people of learning and refinement the manner of its ravages are actually reproduced, life-like, by art and exhibited to the public. More pertinent still is the consideration that it is impossible to form a fair estimate of what one has done, or has failed to do, without knowing what his physical conditions made possible for him. They even fix the bounds of his habitation, and they are an important part of the 'all things' of Romans viii. 28. It is a main purpose too of these pages to show—what has been a wonder unto many and to myself—weakness made strong enough for appointed work that seemed much beyond its power. Above all, those conditions have no small share in the making of a man, as well as in the revealing of him. I

shall therefore proceed as such thoughts would direct.

There are, however, two positions from which I have always viewed the whole subject, and where I ought at once to say that I take my stand. The first is 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20 : 'Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost.' 'Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body.' We dare not, therefore, treat the body carelessly or meanly. I have always preached that we should regard it as God's, and aim at having it in the best condition for His service. My other position is where I stand against the error which speaks of one's infirmity as being his cross. This notion cannot face the test of Scripture. 'Let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me' refers to a person on his way to be crucified, carrying his cross as the rule was. The picture that the words present is that of men following Christ, each with his cross on his shoulder as one who will nail to it everything that ought to be crucified, and who is willing to be nailed to it himself, should this be his Master's will. As for afflictions, infirmities, they are mainly for two purposes : (1) to save from being 'exalted above measure' (2 Cor. xii.), to prove, educate, build up ; our blessed Lord Himself is said to have learned by

the things which He suffered (Heb. v. 8); and (2) for 'the praise of the glory of His grace'; that grace requires to be seen under all kinds of circumstances in order that its riches and power may be fully known, and the call to show it under suffering (1 Peter ii. 21) is to be regarded as a call from God and an honour. It is not service that one would welcome for the pleasure of it, nor is it light service. Yet Paul took pleasure in it, and says 'we glory in' it (2 Cor. xii. ; Rom. v.). I have lately read, 'Neither mental nor moral perfection is possible without physical perfection.' This is not the doctrine of Scripture nor of Christian experience.

I shall go on then here and in subsequent parts of my story as one who does not think bodily health a mean subject, and is not ashamed to tell plainly what manner of life he has found to be the means of restoring or preserving it.

At the foundation I place, with thankful heart, the contentment and freedom from care to which I have already referred—the gift of that grace which rests the soul on God and His Christ and on the assurances which abound in His Word, such as Rom. viii. 28 ; 1 Cor. iii. 22 ; Phil. iv. 6, 7. Next we have a remarkable illustration of the way in which He appoints earthly means to co-operate

with that grace, for the fulfilment of those assurances, viz., the restful shelter of my father's house, for which I cherish undying gratitude, and for the attentions of my youngest sister, Jane Helen, on whom the charge had just devolved at the age of sixteen.

I had very soon given up all medical prescriptions. I did nothing in the way of study, as that word is ordinarily understood; and only read what was easy and interesting. Unhappily for the nation, even the newspapers provided reading of the most engrossing interest. I may say that, with perhaps the exception of the *Daily Mail*, newspapers in Scotland were not published oftener than twice a week, most only once, till the middle of 1855, after the abolition of the stamp duty; and the ordinary price of them was fourpence-halfpenny. By clubbing with others we saw four weeklies on different days. Turkey was already pressed in war by Russia, and in the spring of 1854 England and France went to her support, as well as to defeat the schemes of Russia. They were afterwards joined by the then kingdom of Sardinia (nucleus of the present kingdom of Italy). For a time it seemed as if conclusions would be fought out on the Danube. But when Russia found that Austria also was at the point of war she withdrew.

This was not enough ; she must be conquered. The allies accordingly resolved to attack her in her own dominions, and proceeded to invade the Crimea, the north shore of the Black Sea. Thus began the Crimean War.

On the 20th September 1854 the battle of the Alma was fought, followed by the investment of Sebastopol. Five weeks later came the battle of Balaclava, for ever famous for ‘ the charge of the Light Brigade,’ ‘ the noble six hundred ’: ‘ some one had blundered.’ In this battle also Sir Colin Campbell’s ‘ thin red line ’ acquired its fame. Eleven days afterwards (5th November) the extraordinary battle of Inkermann was fought. The field abounded in hills and glens, coppice and crags, precipices, cliffs, and gorges. It was a battle of fierce detached encounters—a soldiers’ battle. The carnage was awful. The enemy brought forty thousand against six or eight thousand, and they left more than half (twenty-two thousand) disabled or dead.

Only nine days later (14th November) a hurricane of wind broke out with torrents of rain ending in snow. The tents flew away like chaff. The sick and wounded were stripped of their blankets, and left bare at the mercy of the storm. In the harbour of Balaclava twenty-one vessels were

dashed to pieces. They had been full of stores of every kind which were urgently needed for the soldier and the soldier's work, and the dumb animals that served him, but which were now at the bottom of the sea. Even stores that were at Balaclava, seven or eight miles distant, could not be brought up as required because of insufficient transport ; and as there had been no spare strength to make a road, the way between the places had become a quagmire. The poor animals overworked, hungry, weary and distressed fell on all hands and died in the mud. Men could not be spared to bury them, but had to take their work. Even the men's own proper work was woeful. The trenches were often deep in water, and when rifle fire ceased for the night the soldiers sat there crouched up with their back against the wet earth. By the end of November eight thousand sick and wounded were in hospital. The Government had invited the help of women. Then it was that Florence Nightingale stepped into the highway leading to immortal fame. While I am writing these pages her earthly life has closed in her ninety-first year. She and her immediate companions arrived at Constantinople in the beginning of November. Throughout all this the conduct of the men was beyond praise. The

nation shook with rage and grief. All hands set to work, and purses opened, for the soldier. In the House of Commons a motion for inquiry was carried (26th January 1855), and the ministry resigned. Lord Aberdeen had been Prime Minister, and the Duke of Newcastle Secretary for War. In their places came Palmerston and Panmure.

The siege—I might say the bombardment and the reply to it—went on month after month with occasional attacks from either side. The Russians poured soldiers into the town never to leave it again. Readers at home became familiar with the names of its strong towers—worst of all the Malakoff, the Mamelon, the Redan. The allies drew nearer. At last in September, after three and a half days of a terrific cannonade, a successful assault was made. By daybreak on the morrow the garrison had made good their escape. The place had been pounded into rubbish. The soldiers had lived in dismal subterranean barracks, entered by tunnels. The Russians now entrenched themselves north of Sebastopol. But fighting was not resumed. Negotiations began. The Treaty of Paris was signed on 30th March 1856, and two days later the artillery broke its silence to proclaim in salutes the tidings of peace.

Scarcely had the ground swell subsided when

a far greater storm of evil arose, more full of sorrow still. The Indian Mutiny broke out on Sunday evening, 10th May 1857, and was not quelled for two years. No language exists that can express the anguish of spirit which the horrors of it caused at home. Three names of places, more than all others, burnt themselves into our very being, Cawnpore, Delhi, Lucknow. I wish it were possible by a few strokes of the pen to give anything like a correct impression of that awful life and death struggle, or of the conduct either of the mutineers or of our own people and soldiers. But general terms can give no idea of it : the details must be known. They are in the keeping of history in many publications. Our Church's now great mission in the Panjab had just been begun, and the first missionary, Rev. Thomas Hunter, and his wife and child were massacred within five months of his arrival.

Boswell's *Life of Johnson* was an ideal book for me. Open it where I might, I found myself in good company listening to, and, if I chose, mentally taking part in, conversation on an infinity of subjects of universal interest. I did enjoy the wisdom and wit, the common sense and vigour of that great and pious man. I have refreshed my memory lately, and find that my

admiration was not due to youthful unfitness to judge.

Novel reading had not reached country boys, and indeed not a few people thought it wrong to read such books. I had read no fiction of such dimensions as to be called a novel. But now this literature proved itself a very great boon to me. Sir Walter became my dear friend, and, I have no doubt, one of my physicians. Others than he came also to my aid with their best, among whom, I think, Bulwer Lytton was chief favourite.

Graver books there were, but I need say no more on the subject, except that I cannot omit reference to the ever present Book of Books itself. When I was receiving licence to preach I had to declare that I believed it 'to be the supreme rule of faith and morals.' This was rather less than the fact, for while the rightful position which it ought to hold is there stated, the actual position which it did hold with me is not stated. It had wrought for itself in my spiritual being a place where it served the double purpose of being an almost self-acting touchstone for truth and morals, and a solace in every trouble. At convenient seasons I had what I may call sessions of an evening class for the servants, and in the work of it nothing gave me so much pleasure as the

reading of Scripture with them. So also when upon my bed in the morning I added some of its gems to the treasures of memory.

There was nothing in the ecclesiastical world of sufficient importance to invite attention. The farm was a source of interest to me as an onlooker. Every season brought its appointed work for man and beast — tilling, sowing, tending, gathering, rejoicing in the weather or struggling against it. The seasons also piled up additional testimony to the Supreme power, the Fountain of life, the Giver of all, as the fields grew green again, and the buds came peeping out, and the flowers displayed their beauty, and as we saw ‘first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.’ There was the whole family of animals too—the gambolling young things, and the seniors scarcely lifting their heads from the serious work of making their living. Like man himself they had their vicissitudes and their share of the ills that flesh is heir to. What a heart-moving appeal there is in the eye of an animal in great distress !

The blithest farm scene of the year was the reaping in harvest time. Already it has disappeared in presence of machinery, and I would fain call it back for a word of farewell. Three or four scythemen, strong and lithesome, as one

man with rhythmic sweep laid the corn in swathes. Each was followed closely by a gatherer, a young woman, laying it by the armful on a band which she had flung down, made in a twinkling by her nimble fingers. Then came the binder who bound the sheaf and stooked it ; and last of all the raker drawing a large rake by a belt on his shoulder. The conclusion of the reaping was called ' clyack '—a word of which I know neither the origin nor any other meaning than I have stated. The last sheaf was a tiny thing with a band around it in two or three places, and was borne by him that bound it to a place of honour in the kitchen. Then came the ' meal-and-ale,' a potent and satisfying dish. Oatmeal was stirred into the best home-brewed ale with a little syrup, to a consistency neither thick nor thin. It had got an hour or two to ferment slightly, and now was served in a few dairy plates, with a couple of glasses of whisky poured on the top. A ring also was dropped into it ; and this, as the contents of the dish diminished, became of the most exciting interest, for was it not prognostic of early marriage for the happy finder ?

Not a few people came about the business of their callings—for example, and oftenest of all perhaps, the veterinary surgeon ; and with them I had interesting conversation, getting much

knowledge, and giving a little. On the placid surface of a life so quiet the ripple of a miniature tragedy makes a great sensation. I refer to an incident of this kind because I wish to give an instance of healing by 'first intention.' A chisel slipping from its work cut one of my fingers to, if not into, the bone. After a few hours I dressed it simply with a wet rag, and fixed the wrappings as securely as I could against shifting, being resolved not to see it again, if possible, till it was healed. Only during the first two or three days, and only twice in all, it called for, and got, a dip in cold water in its wraps. Thereafter it remained in comfort for about three weeks, when it was uncovered perfectly whole.

I never in any matter allowed my likings or dislikings to hinder the duty of the moment, and one day was like another. I had ten hours in bed. I took no flesh or fish, vegetables or fruit, tea or coffee, butter or sugar, no soups, nothing between meals. The principal one (which I continued for years after I was at work again) was some farinaceous article boiled in milk—we may call it milk pudding with a little salt, and no egg, or sugar, or any accompaniment. Then there was barley-meal porridge and milk, egg whipped and heated, thoroughly toasted bread with hot milk.

Neither then nor since have I wasted my heat with cold dishes or drinks. Twice a day I took as much exercise as I was able for, and rarely allowed the weather to make me take it under cover. I may say the house stood high amid plenty of fresh air. With the apothecary I had no more dealing than was absolutely necessary. I did no work, yet happily was preserved from laziness. I have often said I wish I had not grown up with the notion that the conventional way of eating and clothing is the only right way. I believe I must have been hurt both from within and from without. As for clothing, I learned that the only sensible rule is to wear from day to day, be it much or little, that in which you are comfortable, adding or subtracting as your comfort dictates—relying mainly on underclothing, and this from neck to toe. Somehow I never slouched into a slovenly or even holiday habit of dress during those years. Only the white tie gave place to black ; all else continued as before, and as it does still, even to the silk hat !

I have spoken mostly of the physical effects of those seven years in seclusion. They could not fail to tell also on the higher nature, and those who are interested in my tale may wish to know something of how that long time in the valley affected

the moral and spiritual. A general treatment of the subject would be out of place, and I shall only touch on one or two points which bear most directly on the years that were to come. The more completely one is allowed to feel that 'Vain is the help of man,' the more he values clinging to Christ in living union, and the more there is occasion for the exercise of faith in God. So exercised, it not only grows stronger, but becomes more and more a habit. Heart and mind acquire an upward look. One natural and spiritual consequence of this living reliance on God and Christ is courage and perseverance in every good purpose. Those years cultivated the habit of looking straight up from the centre to the zenith. No object deflected the vision, no party cry distracted the attention. The mind got accustomed to look for the course that should be taken in the light of high motive ; became practised in dealing with affairs in that light ; practised in facing duties that otherwise might seem far beyond the power to discharge them ; practised also in judging of its own individual responsibility. Surrounded by conflicting voices, jeered at or encouraged, it learned to give the dominant place to the question, ' Lord, *what* wilt THOU have ME to do ? ' (Acts ix.). And when asking fitness for the

duties of the day, or for any single duty, I have learned to specify fitness of body as well as soul. So when I pray 'Give us this day our daily bread,' I consciously use the words as including health, without which bread will hardly serve its purpose. I may always have had something of the disposition that is stimulated rather than daunted by difficulties. Certainly now by constant exercise it had been practised into a habit, most valuable for the rest of my life.

'That we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted' (2 Cor. i.). This is one most gracious purpose served by affliction. To be able to tell truths of Scripture which minister comfort is a great thing, but it is greater still when the speaker can add, 'They comforted me.' Nor is this all. Even fellowship in the enjoyment of comfort does not reveal one to another, nor link them together, as fellowship in suffering does. He who has suffered knows also the chinks through which to pour the wine and oil, and can do it with a skill and sympathy learned from his own need. It also keeps one more alive to the duty of intercession, and I believe gives even more pleasure in it. And, on the other side, the heart of him who is being ministered to opens

out to one who is himself known to have come through similar trial.

‘ Sir,’ said Johnson to Boswell, ‘ it is affectation to pretend to feel the distress of others as much as they do themselves. It is equally so as if one should pretend to feel as much pain while a friend’s leg is cutting off as he does.’ All most true. Yet, if one should have the misfortune to have had his own leg cut off first, he would the better know what his friend’s feelings must be.

When I entered the race again I was handicapped by being among my juniors, by the reputation of poor health, and by being fit only for certain places. I was stationed at Torrance of Campsie, and another was at Milton of Campsie. He died recently, Dr. Bayne, the much respected minister of Tingwall, Shetland. Soon after my arrival Dr. Munro set out as one of a commission appointed by the General Assembly to British Guiana on disciplinary duty, and I was brought to Lennoxtown, the headquarters. Preparatory to his return we arranged a congregational demonstration to welcome him. An amusing instance occurred to Dr. Munro—a man of high character—of the risk of quoting hearsay, which exempts no one, and may be false as well as true. The letter

carrier, being a suitor for the hand of the domestic at the manse, but being unsatisfactory in the matter of drink, was put on a period of probation. During this the minister meeting him in his rounds one day said, 'I'm sorry to hear, John, that you are not quite keeping to the agreement.' To which came the sympathetic answer, 'Ah, sir, but gin ye heard what they're sayin' aboot *yersel*!'

It is curious how absolute strangers, who have once been unexpectedly thrown together, may be so again and again. At Lennoxton I made the acquaintance and friendship of a licentiate of the Free Church, now Dr. Archibald Henderson, Moderator of the United Free Church of Scotland in 1909. He was there in charge of a Home Mission station. We took part in evangelistic meetings. I may anticipate and tell that we were not distant neighbours when he was at Crieff and I at Ardoch, and I once preached to young men from his pulpit. We were on the joint committee of the Churches that compiled the *Church Hymnary*; and again in conference in carrying out the union of our Churches for their work in Calcutta; and now at last we are members of the conference aiming at union of our Churches.

Shortly after Dr. Munro's return, making my way north on holiday, I called on my friend Dr.

Webster, Anstruther Easter, who became minister of St. John's, Edinburgh, and lastly of Cramond. He said to me: 'It is time you should be looking out; there is a place here where a man may make his mark, Lochgelly chapel.' I was elected. And I may mention an incident which was afterwards told me by an elder and his wife, godly people. They said that one night the elder awoke his wife saying he had three times distinctly seen in a dream the man who was to be their minister—he saw him go into the pulpit and strike a light, he could tell him anywhere; and that when my turn came to preach, the moment I appeared in the vestry door, he said to her, 'That's the man I saw.'

CHAPTER III

LOCHGELLY AND ARDOCH

I WAS ordained to the chapel of Lochgelly, Fife, on Thursday, 24th October 1861. I worked hard among the miners, and many curious colloquies we had, in some of which there was a kernel of meaning that made them memorable. Evening was the time to see the men. One night, as I was known to be in the row, they had time to prepare. It would be close on nine o'clock when I knocked at a door and got no response. Then tried the latch in vain; and then at the window said: 'Ye 're no' to yer beds, are ye?' 'Nah, we 're no' to wer beds.' 'I was comin' in to see ye—ye ken wha I am?' 'Oh, ay, we ken fine wha ye are, but we 're no' wantin' ye; rin ye awa hame.' 'Good night.' 'Guid nicht.' On a Sunday evening within a few minutes of public worship, one was shown into my room, evidently in course of recovering from drunkenness. 'Oh, Jeamie, man, I can't see you now, I'm just going to church; come back to-morrow.' Very solemnly, 'To-

morrow is not mine.' 'How do you know that?' 'I'm gaun to dee 't mysel.' In quite a business tone I said, 'Oh, are you? How are you going to do it?' 'Throw mysel doon a pit, or lay mysel in afore the train that comes up at ten o'clock.' Cheerily, 'You're a great fool, Jeamie!' 'Mr. Mair, could ye gie me a saxpence?' 'A saxpence! What's the use of saxpence to a man that's to throw himsel doon a pit? I'll tell you what: if you do that, you won't need the saxpence; and if you don't, you can come back for it to-morrow.' Exit. To an intelligent man, who took part in 'penny readings' and the like, but always drank his wages, I said, 'I wonder, Henry, that a man of your ability should work so hard for your wages just to waste them in that way.' 'Do you think I would work so hard if it werena to get the drink?' One Saturday afternoon on my way from an outlying row to Lochgelly, I met one of my members visibly affected, but expecting me to converse with him. 'Oh, John, man, I am sorry to see you this way again.' 'Weel, minnister, I tell ye what it is; if I'm no' to be alloo'd to dee *jist as I like*, I'll gie up the hail concern!' There was a harmless man, a joiner, who took times of drinking, during which he wandered about the streets, especially when he had

begun to recover, with hanging head in the most forlorn, forsaken-looking manner. One day meeting me, he came straight in front of me, face to face, and said with the most affecting, desperate earnestness, ‘Oh, sir, if I was a minister, I would *preach like the verra deevil*,’ and passed on. The following was keenly appreciated by the General Assembly when told on the subject of Home Missions. I called on one of my members about a son of his, a Sabbath scholar. When we had finished that, he wondered why I did not visit him. I answered, ‘I have visited you even now. I come when there is reason, you see. What would you wish me for—is it to pray in your house? If you do this yourself, it is unnecessary; if you do not, would you teach your family that when the minister comes in religion comes in, and when the minister goes out religion goes out? Oh, man, man! you know how, morning, noon and night, I am toiling to within an inch of my life, among those poor people who never were within a church, and most of whom never heard the name of God except in an oath, and you would have me leave them and come to you. Nay, but come you with me to them.’

We were overtaken in Lochgelly by an epidemic of typhoid fever. Dr. (afterwards Sir) William

T. Gairdner had just published his *Public Health in Relation to Air and Water*. Passing rich on £80 a year I got the book, one result of which was that I sent water from some of the wells to Edinburgh for analysis. The report was not good, but the memorable thing is that the favourite well of the place was excessively bad. I read up the disease also, in Murchison's newly published volume on fevers. We had some severe and prolonged cases, but I think they all recovered. This reminds me that after the epidemic was past and gone, I was the means of saving the life of one of my elders. He was in extreme danger. Convinced that the diagnosis and treatment were wrong, I led to a specialist being brought from Edinburgh—not a moment too soon.

Desiring to see my miners at work I was clad in an underground suit of the manager, Andrew Landale, and escorted by an underground manager (both were elders). In this style, and with the miner's lamp in the front of my cap, I passed through the village unsuspected, and was let down. One experience in the depths I have not forgotten. We had to crawl almost at full length through a short tunnel cut in a rock. At every movement the back going against the hard relentless rock above caused an inexpressible

feeling of helplessness. For once in my life, but only once, and that only for a moment, I think I knew what utter despair is.

The parish of Fintry had become vacant. The patron was the Duke of Montrose, whose place of worship was the parish church of Buchanan. He requested his minister to give him an opportunity of hearing me. I believe this was through the Lennox family of Lennox Castle, Campsie. Accordingly I officiated at Buchanan. A day or two afterwards the minister wrote me that the Duke had expressed himself in such a way that I might count on the parish ; and for himself, the minister said that, if that sermon was my own (!), I might have the highest place in the Church. After some time he wrote that the Duke found himself unable to get over the claims of a former tutor in the family, and he sent me a read of His Grace's letter to him, which said among other things that it would be a pity to bury such a man in Fintry. My creed made me quite content, and I felt more encouraged and amused than disappointed.

At Lochgelly I drew up a three years' scheme of Sabbath School lessons which became my valued companion and assistant in the Sabbath School ever after, during the whole of my ministry,

adapted to the changing dates year after year. It cost too much to be put on the market, but for my own use it was thought a worthy draft on my small stipend.

During my three years and five months in Lochgelly I raised the required local £1000 for its endowment, and saw the manse in process of erection. A farmer in the neighbourhood on whom I called did not see his way to contribute, but he hospitably brought out the bottle, full to the cork. While he was pressing me to partake I said, 'I dare say you would let me take it all?' 'And welcome,' said he. 'Then, if you please,' said I, 'I'll take it in money.' The point tickled him, but did not bleed him. When I presented my collecting book to our banker for his contribution, he said, 'It is all very well for you to give a large contribution, you are building a manse for yourself.' 'Sir,' I said, 'I shall never enter your manse.' So it was: the manse was not more than half built when I left.

Just after that dialogue a good, fatherly friend, the Rev. D. Bell, Kennoway, said to me I ought to go to some better place, and suggested the parish of Ardoch, Perthshire, which was then vacant. The Crown was patron, but gave the people their choice if they agreed. I was chosen.

The presentation was given in January 1865, and I was inducted on Thursday, the 6th April.

Though patronage was long lived (1711-1874), a presentation is already an almost forgotten curiosity. An account of my Crown presentation may therefore be of some interest. It is in the name of the Sovereign, beginning in common form, 'Victoria, By the Grace of God,' etc., considering that the parish of Ardoch is 'now vacant and in Our Gift,' and being informed that M. 'is a Person duly qualified to supply that vacancy,' we 'nominate, present and appoint' him, granting him the stipend, manse and glebe and all the emoluments, requiring the presbytery to 'admit and receive' him 'in such manner as is directed by law.'—'Given at Our Court at St. James's and under Our Privy Seal at Edinburgh,' the 16th December 1864. 'Written to the Seal and Registered' the 2nd January 1865. 'Sealed at Edinburgh' the 3rd January 1865. It is written on parchment. The seal is a mass of red wax, $\frac{3}{4}$ in. thick and 4 ins. diameter, stamped with the Royal Arms of Scotland. It is attached by a ribbon of parchment which is passed through slits at the end of the document, and has its ends brought and embedded in the wax. The seal is protected by a close fitting tin box. Before

admission to office ministers (like many others then and still) had to 'qualify to Government,' that is, take the oath of allegiance. It was convenient for me to do this at the Burgh Court of Edinburgh. It may be added that by induction to a parish, one becomes a member of three courts of the realm—the Kirk-Session, the Presbytery, and the Synod.

The parish of Ardoch lies so that the railway between Perth and Stirling runs through the south part of it. Roughly, it is six miles either way, with the church and the small village of Braco about the middle of it, and about a mile from Greenloaning station. Its distinction is the Roman Camp. None but a specialist has the knowledge or inclination to trace the parts of the extensive site. But the *prætorium*, or officers' quarters, is obvious and interesting to all. Its situation is about five minutes' walk from the village on the road to Crieff, on the right hand, in a pasture field on the estate of Ardoch. It is a square place encompassed by five defensive trenches, the whole occupying about five acres. The trenches on two adjoining sides (north and east) are in wonderful preservation, and might even now be useful in an emergency. The

thoughts are carried back to fifty years after the death and resurrection of our Lord, and ten years after the destruction of Jerusalem by the same great Roman power—vanished ‘as a dream dies at the opening day.’

The farms in the parish would range from nearly one hundred to two hundred acres. The population was under a thousand, yet there was a Free church within a stone-throw of the Parish church. The work of the ministry was such as is usual in a rural parish. Old social customs had a firm hold, and nonconformity was by many almost resented as incivility. In such circumstances it was of immense importance for the young to be backed up with sound views, and hearty encouragement. When I had been some time there one of my hearers, who was beginning to be an elderly man, and who probably overstepped at times, told me that I would be immensely popular if I would not meddle with their little peccadilloes. To this I replied : ‘Is it fair that you should all do as you like for six days, and that I should be grudged an hour on one day to say what our Master’s views are ?’ When I was visiting in a fever-stricken farmhouse the mother bewailed to me the infirmity of the doctor which, notwithstanding his skill, prevented confidence in him. My remark

was, 'Poor fellow ! and yet I venture to say that you give him drink every time he comes.' This with some confusion she acknowledged, giving the excuse that she knew he liked it. I need hardly say the subject did not drop at this point.

An amusing story from Stirling was current. There was an undefinable sort of character of very miscellaneous experience who occasionally turned up on the market day. One morning he went full of importance into a leading licensed grocer's shop, impressively asking to see the master. To him he said confidentially that he had got to know a secret which might be of great value, and out of friendship he would tell it for a 'nip.' Flouted at first, he at last got the nip, and then in a whisper said : 'If they should put you on the treadmill, be sure and try to get neist (next) the wa'.'

Another comes to mind from the neighbouring parish of Blackford. In the village of that name there lived one who, with a good deal of cleverness and pawkiness, yet was under the care of the Board of Lunacy. Their inspector making his ordinary visit was in conversation with him and the chief man of the place, when the patient said to the official : 'Could you tell the difference noo

atween *him* and me ? . . . *He* 's daft and he disna ken 't ; I 'm daft, and I ken 't.'

I must take a step back in the tale of myself. It might have been about midtime at Lochgelly that I was one forenoon aiding preparations in the church for a children's entertainment in the evening, when in a moment I was seized with violent pain in the right side and sickness. I crawled home to bed, but before evening the illness had considerably abated, and I arose and took my place at the entertainment. As was afterwards revealed, this was the first demonstration in force of a pitiless enemy from which I was often to suffer grievously, and which in some degree never ceased from troubling for seven long years. Yet not till looking backwards from the end, when, by reading and personal knowledge, even I might have passed for an expert, could any one tell what had been going on. It will be fair to bear this in mind, for mystery in the proceedings of a trouble adds to the trial. Nowadays the X-rays would have given the needful light, and perhaps led to deliverance, but more than twenty years had to elapse ere this powerful friend came to the help of man. I could scarcely have been six months in Ardoch when I had a terrific onset of pain and sickness under which

I writhed in bed for days. It was, unknown at the time, the movement of a calculus, the size of a field bean and rough on the surface (known as the mulberry) passing from the right kidney into the narrow descending duct in the side. One effect of this overpowering experience was to sharpen the sense of dependence on God and man.

Where there 's a will there 's a way. I had a class of boys and girls whom I wished to be able to read Psalm tunes, but there was no one who could teach. I had given some attention to the science, but could not venture to lead in singing; and a musical instrument was as yet inadmissible. With the assistance of one who could lead, but could not teach, I taught the solfa notation, so that I had only to turn up a tune (the keynote being stated in the book), and hand the pitch-fork to any one of the class who had musical faculty, and away went the tune correctly in the solfa syllables.

Ardoch is in the presbytery of Auchterarder. It fell to me on 21st December 1865, to take the service (in those days one man did all) at the ordination of the successor of the minister, Mr. Young, whose presentation to the parish of Auchterarder gave rise to the great Auchterarder

case. When at last, after the long and most anxious ordeal of the civil courts, the case was decided against the Church, and Mr. Young had to be settled, the service was in a practically empty church. This was on 4th August 1843. The Disruption was over, and Rachel weeping for her children because they were not. No fewer than eight ministers (three of them D.D.'s) from outside the presbytery were present at that induction, doubtless from sympathy with the presbytery, and likely also with the presentee. Mr. Young's ministry of twenty-two years filled that empty church, and now at the ordination of his successor there was not a vacant sitting to be seen.

On the 21st August 1866 I was married to Isabella Edward, whose acquaintance I had made at the manse of her brother-in-law, Dr. Simpson, Dysart, when I was at Lochgelly. She has been a help unsurpassably meet for me. Indeed I do not know what I should have done without her—in complete sympathy with the work of the ministry; ready to serve in anything, even to taking in an emergency the duty of the precentor, or, in later days, of the organist; blest with vigorous health, good sense, and hands for everything; full of resource; an adept in domestic

affairs ; whose servant sat in our pew as regularly as herself, while yet on our return all had a warm meal ; and whose first care has been for her husband. I would have young men and maidens turn up Proverbs xix. 14, and *ask, ask*. The verse will be just as true if husband is put instead of wife.

Innovations in public worship had been the subject of overtures to the General Assembly of 1863, and a committee was appointed to report next year. A deliverance was then given expressing determination to enforce the laws of the Church in respect to innovations whereby the peace of congregations or of the Church generally was disturbed. It gave some exhortations also, but threw no light on the law. Naturally, therefore, more overtures came up in 1865, and a Declaratory Act was passed. But in 1866 overtures came again, from which it appeared that the Act ‘had been misunderstood in various quarters’ ; and so the Act of 1866 was passed—the last on the subject. Some had contended that the ordering of matters in worship belonged to the kirk-session : the Act *inter alia* declares that it belongs to the presbytery. A case from our presbytery of Auchterarder was the first under the Act. Trouble arose in Crieff over the introduction of an organ, and we referred the case to the Assembly of 1867,

which found sufficient evidence that the introduction of instrumental music would be a cause of division, and instructed the presbytery to disallow any proposal made to them for that purpose, and to see to the observance of worship according to the ordinary practice. Accordingly the organ was silenced. Eleven months afterwards a deputation from the kirk-session and the congregation came to the presbytery with documentary evidence that opposition had ceased; and the presbytery saw 'no cause for their interference.' The discussions in this case first aroused me to a particular interest in constitutional Church law.

One of my elders, Mr. Kellie M'Callum, a retired Edinburgh Writer to the Signet, was proprietor of Braco, living at Braco Castle. He pressed me hard to allow him to mention my name in connection with the Tron Church, when Dr. Maxwell Nicholson left it for St. Stephen's in 1867. Of course I was immovable, and could only wonder that he had not taken a more correct measure of my bodily unfitness.

I had been three years and four or five months at Ardoch when one morning I was writing to the *Scotsman* in refutation of its theory that indifference to church-going was caused by ministers

being chained to the Confession of Faith. I was showing that always the very men who crowded their churches with all ranks (*e.g.*, Chalmers, Guthrie, etc.) cleaved to the doctrines of the Confession, and made them their great themes. I was thus engaged when my wife, opening the letters, gave an exclamation of surprise. She had opened one from Dr. Nicholson, asking if I would accept Earlston if it were offered me.

It will be convenient to part with Ardoch here. On the morning of Tuesday, 16th February 1869 when the elders kindly came to help us, and to say good-bye, they said something also that was pleasant to hear. I had known that at the last three elections of a minister, within their own day, there was a traditional cleavage between two sets of parishioners which had come down from the days when Ardoch was a chapel, and according to which it was something like treason not to vote with one's set. The elders now told me that one effect of my ministry had been, that for the first time within living memory this foolishness had been dropped, and they had acted together, any difference of opinion being no longer according to set, and were already prepared to nominate to the Crown. This was some offset to what had been said to me a good while before. At a com-

munion season I had got the assistance of my two predecessors, Mr. Bonallo and Mr. Campbell. We then had the Thursday Fast-day, and public worship on Saturday and Monday. A few days afterwards I was calling on a parishioner, who for a long time had not been much out of her chair, and was naturally of a grumpy turn. I said, 'They will have been telling you that they have had all three Ardoch ministers at this time.' 'Oh ay. I ken little guid that ony o' ye ever did.'

CHAPTER IV

EARLSTON TO MIDTIME

EARLSTON parish is in the west of Berwickshire, with only the Leader between it and Roxburghshire—a beautiful country. Before there were printed books, and when there was but little writing, it was next to impossible to have uniformity in the spelling of a place-name. Writers would have to do their best to reproduce the name as they heard it spoken. In our case the finest sound, and the happiest hit in writing it, was Ercildoune. It has undergone many changes. When I went there the name was in process of passing from Earlstoun to Earlston.

Roughly, the parish may be six miles by three. The village, in the west end of it, numbers one thousand inhabitants. Here stood the Parish church and two United Presbyterian churches; and a school besides the parish school. Though it had a railway station, its letters came and went by mail gig to Melrose, four and a half miles distant—all the seven days of the week.

The whole population of the parish was about seventeen hundred and seventy. It was very suitable for me. I made no inquiry, and did not know beforehand what the stipend of any of my charges was. There was no *Year-Book* in those days.

One farm extended to thirteen hundred acres, requiring eight pairs of horses; the next in size was seven hundred and twenty-five acres; and the rest were still smaller—down to one hundred and thirty acres. The live stock was mainly sheep. There were two or three dairy crofts close by the village. The farm servants were married and lived in farm cottages.

Earlston has no unimportant place both in Scottish history and romance.

The foundation charter of Melrose Abbey, given by King David I., written in Latin, bears place and date 'At Erchildon in June.' Such deeds rarely showed a date at all. It has to be sought by circumstantial evidence—for example, who the numerous witnesses were. There were thirty-four witnesses to the Melrose charter. The usual number was from six to ten. The year of this charter is put at 1136, or 1143 or 4. The king's son and heir, Earl Henry, who predeceased him, confirmed it by a deed, the date of which is believed to be 1143 or 4.

There is a tradition that James IV., in 1513, on his way to Flodden, passed through Earlston, having forded the Leader at the west end of the village where the present 'old' (1735) bridge is. He left Edinburgh with the part of his army which had assembled there, on the 17th August, took the road over Soutra hill, and crossed the Tweed at Coldstream on the 22nd. Between Soutra and Coldstream he had, according to our tradition, taken the route by Lauder, Earlston and Kelso, and had come to Earlston by Blainslie and Craigsford Mains, being the line of the now 'old' road. It was quite a feasible course to take. It is not doubted that this was the line taken by the Romans northwards after Newstead.

Queen Mary made a brief stay at Cowdenknowes on her way, in October 1566, from Edinburgh to Jedburgh. There she gave her countenance at an assize for some days. But hearing that Bothwell, Warden of the Borders, lay dangerously ill from wounds received in some affray, she one day rode to Hermitage Castle and back to see him—a ride of fifty miles or more, according to the road taken. A little room in Cowdenknowes mansion is known as Queen Mary's room.

Lastly came Prince Charlie in 1745 on his march

to England. His route was by Soutra hill, Lauder, and Kelso. By the road between these two towns, having crossed to the east side of the Leader about half-way between them, he marched through our parish on foot at the head of his clans little more than a mile from the east end of the village, on the 4th November. Tradition says the people hid their cattle and sheep in the Howe o' the Hope—a natural hollow a little to the north of the village on the Huntshaw road. Mr. Thomas Clendinnen, Edinburgh, a native of Earlston, tells me that he never has forgot being told by his grandmother (maiden name, Whale) that when she was young she had conversed with an old woman who said that in her youth she was baking in her house at Craigsford Mains when some of Prince Charlie's men came in famishing and ate her bannocks off the girdle. Part of his followers might very well have come by that same way which I have said tradition assigns to James IV., and passed through the village to join the main body. Indeed this is much the easier of the two roads—I have driven both. They part about half a mile from Lauder. Both are to the west of the Leader at first, and both cross it—the Blainslie one at Earlston as we have seen, the other about half way to it.

But above all Earlston is renowned as being the seat of Thomas the Rhymer, True Thomas, Thomas of Ercildoune. Near by the Leader, and a few yards off the present road to Melrose, rising to the height of some thirty feet stands a part of two massive, ivy-clad walls, the remains of 'Rhymer's Tower.' This highly esteemed relic is now the property of the Edinburgh Border Counties Association, purchased in 1894 for the sake of preserving it. An air of mystery hangs around the Rhymer. He would seem, however, to have been born here, on his small ancestral estate, about the beginning of the thirteenth century ; and on the evidence of his own signature witnessing a deed as Rymour, and from the fact that his son in 1294, conveying all the land he held at Ercildoune to the house of the Holy Trinity at Soltra, describes himself as 'the son and heir of Thomas Rymour of Ercildoune,' it may be accepted that this was his family name—a not uncommon name in the district at the time. But he was none the less a *rhymer*. He was the earliest of Scottish poets, and had a wide reputation. In the popular estimation he is more a prophet than a poet, and many of his rhymes in common currency seem strikingly applicable to subsequent events. A number of them are given by J. B. Pratt in his

Buchan, relating to persons and places¹ in the district of that name. It must not be supposed that Thomas put into writing all that he spoke. In *The Bride of Lammermoor*, when Caleb Balderstone was doing all he could to prevent the Master of Ravenswood from accompanying Sir William Ashton and his daughter, Lucy, to pay them a visit, he became 'as pale as death' at the thought of what had been said by 'Thomas the Rhymer whose tongue couldna be fause.' It had been told him by an auld priest; and he now repeated it 'with a quavering voice and a cheek pale with apprehension.' The four lines are imaginary after the manner of the Rhymer, but the scene shows how such as Caleb regarded him.

Cowdenknowes, celebrated in song for its 'bonny, bonny broom,' is a charming residence beautifully situated on the Leader, about a mile below the village. With only two or three terraces between it and the river, its foundations are fifty feet higher than that; and from its windows is a vision of quiet entrancing landscape. Over the old door of the mansion is the inscription 'S. I. H. V. K. H. 1574,' which reads, Sir James Home Uxor

¹ Bairds of Auchmedden; Cummin, Earl of Buchan; Frasers of Philorth; Fyvie; Gordons of Gight; Hays of Erroll; Keiths of Inverugie; St. Olave's Well; Towie-Barclay.

Katherine Home. She was the daughter of John Home of Blackadder. They were married in 1562, and their grandson succeeded to the earldom of Home. The walls bear also a plainer and weightier writing: 'Feir God. Flie from Sinn and mak for y^e Lyfe Everlestyng.' It chanced that this was on the outside of 'Queen Mary's room.' I wonder how it struck her. There is a very pleasing modern tale of this estate. There were two Liverpool merchants, Gilfillan and Cotesworth. Because of some unexpected turn in the market Gilfillan came to Cotesworth saying that unless he was assisted to tide over the crisis he would have to sell at a loss which would be ruin. Cotesworth readily proved the friend in need. Gilfillan afterwards bought Cowdenknowes, and being unmarried he left it in gratitude to Cotesworth. When I went to Earlston, Mrs. Cotesworth his widow resided there. When her son came into possession, and after his large family were well grown up, he sold the estate. It now belongs to Colonel Charles Hope and Mrs. Hope, and all Earlston would say, 'Long live the Hopes.'

A mile up the river is Carolside, one of the residences of Lord and Lady Reay.

The Lindsays were the ecclesiastical patrons of Earlston. William de Lindsei de Ercildoune

granted to the Priory of Coldingham the church at Ercildoune. Earlston church dates from the beginning of the twelfth century. The earlier buildings were small, thatched, and had only a few seats 'for the lairds.' The people generally stood or brought 'creepies.' The present beautiful church, erected in 1892, is probably the fourth of the churches—all on the same site. We find Bishop de Bernham of St. Andrews consecrated one in 1243. John Goudie, D.D., Principal of Edinburgh University, and Moderator in 1733, was minister of Earlston from 1704 to 1730.

My predecessor, David William Gordon, had been a popular preacher in his day who spoke from memory. He was something of a character also. Tall and of a good presence, with very abundant hair, first red and then white, he had an imposing appearance. He spoke at a measured pace; and had an agreeable voice, to which, however, he added a nasal twang. Having heard that one of his daughters, who was a clever mimic, sometimes imitated himself, he one day insisted on getting a specimen. But the twang so kindled his wrath that he quickly shouted, 'Margaret, stop that.' He had cultivated flattery to a fine art, and used it without stint. Cynicism also played a good second to it. He might bring the

two into action singly or together. Dr. Phin, Galashiels, told me that Dr. Boyd of St. Andrews ('A.K.H.B.') was brought by him to Earlston manse to be introduced. Mr. Gordon overflowed with pleasure, and a sense of the honour done him by having so distinguished an author under his roof. Not many minutes later he said, 'By the by, Kenneth, who did you say your friend is?' With all alike he began, 'Well, my worthy friend,' and sometimes with the fair sex, 'my lovely friend.' Even for him flattery might at times be impossible, but still he shone. He had given an order to a village tailor, an old man, for a coat. When finished, the coat was brought home by the maker, and tried on by the owner. Then looking himself all over he said, 'Are you sure, James, that this is my coat?'

In those days there was no church help for 'Aged and Infirm' ministers, and Mr. Gordon continued in office till he died at the age of eighty-four. For upwards of twelve years the parish had been practically in the hands of a succession of probationer assistants. At my coming, Dr. Phin said to me, 'What is wanted is to *live* Christianity.'

The Crown was patron. Dr. Nicholson invited

me to preach in St. Stephen's, Edinburgh. I afterwards learned that among the worshippers were the Lord Advocate and the Earl of Haddington, proprietor of about five-sevenths of the parish, and Lord Lieutenant of the county. The presentation to Earlston was the same in form as that to Ardoch, and dated the 3rd November 1868, 'sealed at Edinburgh' next day. I 'qualified to Government' in presence of Mr. Drummond of Ardoch, J.P.

The required appearances before the congregation were made. There was present one of the few that remained of the numerous craft of weavers in Earlston—an elderly man of high intelligence, good bearing and manners, whose habit it was to express himself deliberately and with much propriety of speech. His words on this occasion were often repeated to me: 'I went to criticise, but he disarmed me.' It is he, William Shiels, who repeated to me, and afterwards gave me in writing, the prayer on page 162. I was inducted on Thursday, 18th February 1869—the fourth eventful Thursday for me.

The Earl of Haddington, living at Tynninghame, besides being principal proprietor, was a native of Earlston, one of a family born in the mansion-house of Mellerstain in the east end of the parish

—from which his father, Mr. George Baillie, might be seen driving to the church in a carriage and four. Two brothers and a sister now lived, a happy family, at Dryburgh, six miles from Earlston—Major Baillie, Admiral Baillie, and the pretty Lady Grisell Baillie. Every one of that name had always taken, and continued to take, a deep interest in the parish, ready to support anything that was to be for its good. Lord Haddington was Commissioner to the General Assembly in 1867 and 1868. Among his friends he frankly expressed his surprise at finding the speaking in the Assembly so good, and better than in Parliament.

After my settlement Lady Grisell confided to me that the mover in my appointment had been the major, who, she said, had been afraid of my being picked up before this time. Major the Honourable Robert Baillie was an elder at Bowden, of influence in the Church, and distinguished by a high type of Christian spiritually-minded life. He was for many years a member of the General Assembly, noticeable for his tall, slender, erect figure and refined features, and for the shortness and clearness of his speeches. I had no personal acquaintance with him, though immediately after my presentation to Earlston a very valuable friendship began with him and Lady Grisell and the

admiral. It was a privilege to know them. A short account of the major's beautiful life, which closed in 1888, is given by Lady Grisell in *Recollections of a Happy Life* (R. and R. Clark, 1890). To this I contributed a Prefatory Note.

Lady Grisell Baillie bore the name, and was the great-great-granddaughter of the girl heroine of covenanting times, whose father was Sir Patrick Hume, eighth Baron of Polwarth, and first Earl of Marchmont. We may recall that this child, at the age of twelve, was sent by her father to carry a letter to the martyr Robert Baillie of Jerviswood in prison, and to bring intelligence; and she afterwards by night ministered to her father in hiding in the vaults of Polwarth church. This was in 1684. On her visit to the prison, the prisoner's son George fell in love with her, and thus she came into the line of the Baillies. A charming sketch of the life of our Lady Grisell has been written by her sister, Lady Ashburnham, with a selection of her addresses and of prayers by Major Baillie (R. and R. Clark, 1892). It is there said that she and the major 'took very special interest in this their native parish, and considered it a valuable privilege to hear Dr. Mair's communion addresses.' All three came regularly to the communion, and the major (who acted as an

elder) was sure to write me on the morrow—a custom kept up by Lady Grisell after he was gone. She then sent me also (and I have them still) such entries as were not too sacredly private which he had made in his diary on these occasions. Those communications could lead only to profound humility and thankfulness. I may say here that my moments of highest enjoyment in the ministry were when speaking at the communion table. Lady Grisell and the major were constant companions. It may be truly said they ‘walked with God’ and with each other in saintly lives of prayer and Christian service.

Lady Grisell was the first Deaconess of the Church of Scotland, set apart on 9th December 1888 in Bowden Church. I had the pleasure of encouraging her to accept the office, and of proposing her in committee. Her life closed in 1891. On 11th October 1894 was opened ‘The Church of Scotland Deaconess (Lady Grisell Baillie Memorial) Hospital,’ Edinburgh; and in 1897, being moderator, I took part in the ceremony of opening an extension to it.

A curious illustration of a fact in acoustics ¹

¹ See *Speaking*, by the author, pp. 132-4. Fourth Edition. William Blackwood and Sons. 1s. 6d. net. The price is an evidence of my desire to encourage the study.

came out of our having to worship in the Corn Exchange, when the church was being reseated in 1870. On our return to the church a venerable elder said he noticed my voice was rougher, and seemed to have been hurt in the Exchange. There was really no difference in the voice, but in the Exchange he had got used to it with, so to speak, the halo around it begot by the echoing of the place, while in the church this was absolutely wanting, and the voice was heard just as the organs produced it (far, however, from a rough voice). One true discovery he had made—that it is not where the voice seems to be making a good show of sound that the hearing is easiest, but the contrary.

I must not leave behind my relentless foe, the mulberry, for its operations continued so to enter into my life with pain and risks that without it I should not be speaking of myself but of another person. Resuming at that critical juncture in Ardoch, its only course, if that were possible, was down the narrow duct in the side. But apparently it could not move without something to disturb it, and this it seemed to get from time to time by some day of unusual and hard work—quite likely a Sunday. Next morning, when the duties of the day were but beginning, the sudden

attack would come : the enemy was making a move. And so it went on by painful steps, till in the end of that channel it was stayed. There it lay for still more years—itsself a mystery, its effects discomfort and inconvenience. At last came a Sunday when—all unfit—after my work at home I preached in the evening at Kelso, twelve miles distant, driving to and fro. A few days disclosed a new set of conditions. The enemy, let loose, was causing a new pain which increased day by day till the agony of it far exceeded all previous sufferings. Now it was death or surgery, if not both as in the case of my fellow-sufferer at Chislehurst, Napoleon III. Before I had fully recovered, he had died on 9th January 1873. On Saturday evening a telegram was sent to Dr. (afterwards Sir) Patrick Heron Watson, who arrived next forenoon as the people were assembling for the churches. He came into my room kindly, and in a few minutes had his instruments for lithotrity arranged. During the moment when my Earlston doctor, Menzies, was preparing a handkerchief with chloroform (inexpressible boon), I gave myself to the care of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost. The napkin was brought to my nostrils, and I very soon began to ‘go over,’ and at last I partly heard,

partly felt, the slightest possible *click* in the head, and knew no more. The next thing I heard was Dr. Menzies saying, ‘ You ’ll soon be preaching to us again,’ to which, waking as from a sleep, I said, ‘ Is it all over ? ’ and he said it was. Thus ended that long trial on the 24th November 1872. When Dr. Watson came upstairs again after luncheon I got him to show me his instruments and how they were used. Of manly appearance, no person could have a manner and address more pleasing—quiet, easy, and more than kind. To this day I am grateful to him. There is no feeling of comfort more exquisite than the relief from suffering.

It had taken but a short time in Earlston to know that there was one who seemed to have become a part of it, and whom it had taken to its heart—old Dr. Riddell. For fifty years he had practised there, and now attended only friends of long standing by special request. In his day he had been called in by ‘ gentle and semple ’ all around. The doctor had not carried his religion on his sleeve, and I take pleasure in recalling the occasion when (in 1870) I first sat by his bedside. After some conversation I said, ‘ Shall we pray, doctor ? ’ to which he replied,

‘ Oh yes : I believe in prayer. When I have had a difficult case I have had recourse to prayer.’ Another thing he said which has remained with me : ‘ I have never liked the Catechism saying that God did everything *for His own glory*.’ I said, it may not look well at first sight, but if God is of infinite wisdom and holiness and justice and goodness and truth, whatever was for the glory of such a being was bound to be the best, and it seemed a right enough way of measuring what is best. With this he was satisfied. That conversation reminds me of another bedside. I had quoted for my friend’s comfort and encouragement some beautiful words from Isaiah, when he remarked that they were for the Jews. I met his difficulty by reminding him of the text : ‘ If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.’

Dr. Riddell deserves fuller notice. He was a man such as is not commonly supposed to have existed in the medical profession in rural parts. It is not a small thing to say that he was well posted in the literature of his profession, had a knowledge of the newest things in medicine and delighted in speaking of them. But besides, busy man though he was, he knew his Horace well, and could lay his finger on the difficulties of the

poet with their various readings and interpretations. Towards the very end of his life he obtained a reading of *Cæsar's Commentaries* by a great scholar of that day, and took pleasure in it. Though with nothing martial in his bearing, and living peacefully, the operations of war had a wonderful fascination for him—war of every degree—from a street brawl to the clash of nations. He was well read in military history from the days of Alexander the Great down to his own times. All the six volumes of Napier's *History of the Peninsular War* he had read again and again; and could discourse for hours together on the details of the Waterloo campaign, the battles preliminary to the great fight, the positions and numbers of the armies, their mistakes, and so on. He had intended joining the army as a surgeon, but the peace that followed Waterloo prevented this, and he came to Earlston.

He used to tell of a surgical operation in which he was thrown into most strange and difficult circumstances. He was taking off a man's hand in the light of a candle when the man who held the candle fell in a faint, and all was darkness. The arteries were not yet tied and the spurting blood, unknown to him, touched his spectacles, so that when light was got again he could neither see

properly nor, for a while, tell the reason why. The poor sufferer, however, survived it all, and many years after, when I went there, he was my neighbour so near that a wall of his house was the boundary between his ground and mine.

At Sandringham on Sabbath the 10th December 1871 the Prince of Wales, ill of typhoid fever, lay at the point of death. He had somewhat recovered, but had relapsed. The inference that people drew from the bulletins was that the worst must be imminent. Feeling was intense. Bell ringers even were in readiness to toll for him. Prayer was made for him that day in every place of worship. In the afternoon after my Sabbath School one of the teachers sat in the manse, and, as everywhere, this was the subject. 'I believe,' I said, 'that he will not die. These prayers will be heard. I see a great purpose in this. He will rise a better man; the heart of the nation has gone out to him, and when he comes to know all, his heart will go out to it, and they will be knit together as never before.'

The Education Act passed on 6th August 1872, and the election of our first School Board came off in the end of March next. We had a great contest over the question of Bible or no Bible in

the school. Our side fought without bitterness, but with enthusiasm and skill. Two incidents will show. After dark on a Saturday evening the other side were observed to be pasting up bills, that those who came to church next day might have the opportunity of seeing them. But, lo, when Sunday morning came, bills of ours were found to have been pasted over them! Early on the day of the poll my wife went a willing messenger to a manse some miles beyond Hawick, and the minister (a native of Earlston) came and voted. The ballot placed our three candidates, with me first, decisively above the successful two of the other side. We appointed the Earl's factor, Robert Swan, Kelso, chairman. The battle of religious education was fought once for all, and left no ill-feeling behind. In course of time the ministers at the request of the School Board were annually examining together the religious instruction and, I must add, reporting most satisfactorily.

The Free Church never had a church in Earlston, but always had a school. Under the Education Act of 1872 it was now voluntarily transferred to the School Board, which was thus in possession of two schools. I advocated their union in a new building. In the community there was considerable opposition, and in the Board the majority differed from me

in this. I laid the matter before the (then) Board of Education in Edinburgh, who sent Principal Tulloch, one of their number, to see, and then decided in my favour. Site difficulties were next put in the way, till Lord Haddington (son of the nobleman already named) came at my request and judged for himself, and took my view. The position of the school in its grounds, and the plan of its interior were of my devising ; and projectors of other schools came by advice of H.M. Inspector to see it. When it was to be opened we did not so much as suggest to the headmasters how to apportion the work between them. It was opened on 11th May 1877 by Mr. Cotesworth of Cowdenknowes ; and from that day forth the masters, Messrs. Aitkenhead and Berrie, worked in perfect harmony till first one and then the other recently reached the age for retirement. The cause of there having been two schools was ecclesiastical ; and such also in the main was the opposition to their union. Here then I served my apprenticeship, and I could not wish more success for any other union that I desire to see.

Some interest attaches to the story of ‘ one or more bursaries from £5 to £8 ’ annually, now administered by the School Board. James Wilson, Superintending Surgeon, Bombay, by will dated

18th February 1811, left a sum of money, the annual proceeds of it to be called 'a gratuity for the benefit of the school.' This sum fell under the Education Endowments Act, 1882, and correspondence ensued with the Education Department. I had a double interest, being the only surviving trustee of the Wilson Bequest, as well as being now chairman of the School Board. To that Board Earlston is indebted for the bursaries. The records bear witness that, had it not been for the practical views put forward by them and firmly maintained, the money would have been wasted in one crude and fanciful scheme or another.

'Where is the wise?' 'Where is the disputer of this world?' Even in the quietest class of a country parish he may find a place. Visiting farm cottages just after the Whitsunday influx, I found in one of them the goodman facing me at the end of a small table where he sat with a sermon of Spurgeon's before him—very precise. After the usual salutations and a little conversation I said, 'May I ask which of the Churches you are connected with?' *He*: 'I belong to the Church of Christ.' *I*: 'Oh yes; I dare say we all think we do that, but unhappily it is split into many pieces, and this is why I asked which of them

you belong to.' *He*: 'I worship at Melrose.' (By this I saw, but said not, he was a Plymouthist.) Then he opened fire point-blank: 'I think, sir, you said that you are the minister of the parish?' *I*: 'I believe I did say something like that.' *He*: 'Where do you fin' Scripture for that?' *I*: 'I think you said you worship at Melrose?' *He*: 'Yes.' *I*: 'Where do you fin' Scripture for that?' Whereupon the stiffness gave way, he grinned, and became as other men, and in the end gave me a hearty invitation back.

In 1877 I drew the attention of the heritors to the need of enlarging the churchyard. They bought for the purpose half an acre of contiguous good agricultural land at the price of £100. After it was annexed I made a plan for it, showing every lair; and framed regulations for the administration of it, which were approved and printed for the use of all concerned.

About this time the thought was broached by Mr. Cotesworth of Cowdenknowes that it was unworthy of Earlston to be content with its side-paths unpaved. He threw himself into the matter, taking me with him. All lent their aid, and did their part in a successful bazaar. Forthwith the paths were 'hornized' from the whinstone quarries of Gordon. This was about all that had seemed

wanting to complete the attractiveness and comfort of Earlston.

In 1878, however, it was found that the water-supply had fallen off in quantity and quality. At the bidding of the Local Authority, which was the Parochial Board, the business was taken up by its Water Committee, of which I was chairman. It would be difficult to find a parallel to our tale. Upwards of a mile farther out the valley was a little surface well among stones and rubbish, known to yield a small stream unfailingly. We should have to uncover its springs, but the factor, Mr. Swan, had once found that springs disappeared when meddled with. Having satisfied him of the soundness of my views, we were allowed to proceed. Careful to keep, if I may so say, above the water, we proceeded forward and sideways, the bank of earth becoming higher as we advanced level into the rising ground. Thus we cleared a triangular bed of some forty square yards of fine white sand on a gravelly bottom, over the whole of which water quietly bubbled as if boiling. After testing this for a time, we proceeded with our pipe-laying—building a reservoir by the way. With the obliging services of our two local tradesmen (Rodger and Murdison) we needed no professional aid except to level

the course, and this was done as a gift to me by Mr. Mitchell, surveyor, Melrose—a veteran engineer who could tell of his experience with George Stephenson when he was experimenting with locomotives on the public road after dark to the terror of the lieges. Our bed of springs we effectually protected around and above. Bricks were laid openly with others atop of them, then stones, gravel, cement, till the whole looked like a huge bannock. The earth was replaced, and agriculture went on as before. The yield of water was forty-four gallons per minute. The temperature varied only three degrees, from forty-six degrees on 31st March, after an extremely severe winter, to forty-nine degrees on 24th September, at the end of summer. I cannot but mention here the devoted services to myself of William Chisholm, water officer and church officer, who, soon after I left, was cut off in midtime of his days.

The name and seat of our presbytery from its beginning in 1613 had been Earlstoun, variously spelled—at first, Ersilton. But in 1768 when there were some vacancies in the south side the northern brethren took the opportunity of getting the General Assembly to change the seat and

name to Lauder, principally on the ground of better accommodation for 'man and beast.' But now railway convenience spoke out in favour of the original home ; and a few years after my induction a movement began among us for restoration to Earlston. I was appointed to draft the necessary petition to the Assembly. The end was gained by an Act of the Assembly of 1876, and after an absence of one hundred and eight years we returned to Earlston. We numbered nine parishes, and I believe no presbytery did its duties as a court more faithfully. Forty years ago, however, it suffered a taunt not yet forgotten. Just a year after I joined it, the presbytery by a majority—quite unnecessarily, as I thought—overtured the Assembly to say whether the moderator of a kirk-session had a deliberative as well as a casting vote. In his somewhat stilted manner, Dr. Bisset of Bourtie said : ' If there was no wise man among them, was there not one in the neighbourhood ? '

Looking back I am amazed, and know not how it was possible, but for some years the Acting Committee (which was then practically the Committee itself) on Foreign Missions met in Glasgow, and during the last seven years of the seventies I was present, I believe, at every meeting. The sensation comes back of the cold dark winter

mornings, the early breakfast, the early start in my well-warmed wraps, and with my dinner so put up that I could leave the meeting for a few minutes and enjoy it still hot. There was little gain to the committee for all this, but there would be some to myself. At any rate, being called, I went. I have been thirty-eight years on this committee.

The Church Patronage Act, giving congregations the election of their ministers, came into operation on the 1st January 1875. Between the passing of the Act and this date the Commission of Assembly (specially authorised by the Act meantime) framed regulations for its administration. A vacancy had occurred in Lauder by the death of Mr. Middleton on the 27th December, and I had been appointed moderator of the kirk-session. The first documents in the case were issued by me on the 1st January, so that none under the Act could have been earlier anywhere. The very next year, unhappily, a vacancy occurred again by the death of Mr. Watson, and I was again moderator. The mode of procedure prepared by me for the election of the Congregational Committee is that which years afterwards was adopted by the General Assembly, and is ordered to be

read by the moderator at the meeting for electing the committee in all vacancies.

A case of disputed settlement in the parish of New Deer came before the Assembly of 1877. It was the first of its kind under the new Act, and great pains were taken with it. On the motion of the procurator it was held that the congregation had the right to a new period of six months for making an appointment. Several other points having been decided, a committee was appointed to consider the combined effect of the judgments and to prepare a deliverance.

Their report when presented was ordered to be printed, and the discussion was postponed. When it was resumed the procurator moved as in the report. I had fought against the new six months throughout—the point which made the discussion so prolonged. I now moved to omit that part of the motion. The proposal of the committee was, of course, carried. The record says: ‘Mr. Mair dissented for reasons which were read,’ and gives the names of other seven dissentients. Immediately after the Assembly I took up the question in a pamphlet entitled *An Inquiry into Certain Questions affecting the Administration of the Act (1874) on the Appointment of Ministers to Parishes in Scotland*. It was allowed to have

disproved the view taken by the Assembly. Upwards of a year afterwards the case found its way into the Court of Session on the question of the *jus devolutum*. The judges, recounting what had preceded, said the Assembly had no jurisdiction to decide the question of a new six months, and had decided it erroneously—no new vacancy had in any sense occurred.

My experience in the two vacancies at Lauder had given me an interest in the Assembly's Regulations. One Assembly after another was revising them with the help of a committee which existed only for that sitting. In 1878 I represented to the convener, Thomas Graham Murray, W.S. (father of Lord Dunedin, the present President of the Court of Session), that such a course was hopeless, and that there was need for a committee to sit a year, and report. In this he heartily concurred, if I would take the labouring oar. Not being a member of that Assembly some at the table demurred to my being put on the committee; but he got over that, making thereby a new departure. That summer I went north for holiday in the hope of seeing Principal Pirie, and satisfying him that a most serious error had been inculcated on last Assembly relating to the statutory expression 'election and appointment'

of a minister, when it was propounded that the first of these words stated the power and duty of the congregation, and the other the power and duty of the presbytery. I found another ecclesiastic sitting with the Principal. I think it was Professor Trail. The Principal made a stout fight, the other acting a sort of skirmisher's part, but in the end they capitulated. The Regulations as adjusted by that committee were little changed for many years. This was the first law-making in which I had a hand.

Twelve years later an overture was brought up from the presbytery of Ayr by Dr. Dykes, one part of which, founding on the statement that in certain recent instances the election had been attended with serious disorder, proposed vote by ballot. It was remitted to a committee with him as convener. Then followed the elaboration of the Regulations, Schedules, and Suggestions almost as they now stand; and when they were reported to the Assembly of 1892 and approved, Dr. Dykes and I were separately thanked from the chair.

In the year that I went to Earlston the Committee on Christian Life and Work had its origin in an overture by members of Assembly. Professor Charteris appeared for it, and concluded by

moving for a committee, in which he was seconded by Major Baillie. It is noteworthy that their first and second reports were given in by Professor Charteris, though in each case the moderator of the previous year was convener. He was then (1871) appointed convener, and the committee was tripled in number. The deliverance on the first report *inter alia* enjoined Church courts to inquire into Christian work within their bounds and report to their next superior court, that the General Assembly might have full and accurate information; and it directed the committee to inquire into the practical work of the Church and to report. There was enough even in this beginning to account for the committee having for some years to encounter a good deal of secret—and not all secret—dislike and passive resistance. When it was ten years old it instituted the magazine *Life and Work*, the first number of which appeared in January 1879. At this also a certain class whose standard it did not reach must have their fling. Dr. (afterwards Principal) Cunningham, disporting himself over it, said it always reminded him of the lines:—

Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are!

The Doctor had no great body, rather a light voice

and a decided burr, so that the effect was very funny. I was a member of this Committee for thirty-three years, till in 1908 I declined re-appointment because of increasing labours in other matters.

My wife and I were hurried to the south of Yorkshire in the autumn of 1880 by a sudden and alarming illness of my youngest brother, and, on our return within ten days, had the glad surprise of finding that the congregation were prepared with a fine new pulpit gown for me, and a gift of silver for her. The presents were given at a social evening meeting—Admiral Baillie in the chair.

The next important venture to which I was called was the building of a bridge. The Leader on its way to the Tweed runs past Earlston, at the distance of some six hundred yards from 'the Square.' At this point it is crossed by a bridge on the Melrose road. Half a mile up the stream it is crossed also by a ford at Haugh-head, side by side with which was wont to be a wooden footbridge. But no such bridge could withstand the fearful torrent of a Leader flood and the violence with which uprooted trees and other wreckage were hurled against it. One after another had been swept away, the last in 1881. The want of it was a serious matter for people in affairs of commerce, church, and school. Close by there

hung a wooden railing across the stream, a fence for cattle—swinging in the wind or the water, or both. Rather than go round by Melrose road even women might be seen at the acrobatic feat of sidling across on it. After some eighteen months I was appealed to by Mr. Newton of the hotel—moved, he said, by the fact that whatever was taken up by me succeeded. Before many months the present strong suspension bridge was erected. I found the money. No professional advice was called in. The enterprise proceeded on my responsibility, and was in the hands of a young student of engineering, Halliday (whose home at the time was on the spot), along with myself, in consultation with Mr. Robertson, Blinkbonny, and Mr. Tait, road surveyor. The bridge was taken over years ago by the County Councils of Berwickshire and Roxburghshire.

I remember it well—so well—and often have I thought of it. It was about this time, 1882. There was an intelligent, but sceptically inclined and unexemplary tradesman whom I had been the means of bringing to the Saviour. He was suffering from a slow and painful illness during which I often saw him, and which was now drawing to its close. One evening he sent to me saying his

time had now come. I found him quite clear-minded, calm, and expectant. By and by, lying with his face upwards, he said, 'This is it now,' turned the side of his face to the pillow, and was gone.

In 1883 I invested in public-house property in Earlston! We had a hotel and three inns. The inn which might be considered the third was offered for sale. As the only way of getting it removed from the list of public-houses, I resolved to buy it, though that, of course, must be at a price which could not afterwards be recovered for it unlicensed. In this I was joined by John James Fairbairn of Fens and James and Thomas Swan, salesmen—all natives of the parish. The premises are now the property of a prosperous joiner. The transaction brings to mind very pleasing words of the chief constable of the county, George Henry List, when after I had been a year or two in Earlston he congratulated me on its improvement.

No question concerning the well-being of individuals and society has maintained during the whole of my time an interest so unbroken and constantly increasing as questions relating to the use of strong drink. Where I was brought up,

the danger to the young lay almost entirely in the social customs. These involved giving and taking on every friendly occasion, and having it at hand in every house. So the young got accustomed to it, thought of it kindly, and were in danger of acquiring a liking for it. I saw this danger becoming a reality in the case of two young acquaintances, of different families and different professions. It grieved me to the heart, for they were dear to me. I tried all I could, but in vain. It may give some idea of what an abstainer had to face in those days if I tell that the mother of one of them said to me (she had been familiar with my mother), ‘I tell you, William, I would sooner see my son die a drunkard than become a teetotaller.’ Poor fellow ! Those young men are nearer to my heart at this day than any of the multitude that I have since sought to win during half a century.

In such circumstances, how could I be a partaker ? I could have nothing to do with the article or the custom which by working such havoc was entering like an iron into my soul. I had used next to no drink myself, and now would take none. Nor would I offer it ; but if a visitor needed refreshment, I asked what he would have, for I never would compel another against his

will to do as I did in any matter. When the father of the presbytery rode over from Smailholm to call for us after my settlement—an old gentleman who might have been an emperor—I said, ‘What will you have, Mr. Swan?’ To this—having evidently heard something about me—he replied significantly, ‘What will you *give* me?’ ‘I will give you,’ said I, ‘anything that is in the house, or that can be got.’ This was my manner of life during my first two charges, and part of my third at Earlston. It was, of course, well known and respected, and was of good effect. I was repeatedly approached by associations of abstainers with the request that I would join them. I believed it was better that I should not. And, for the matter of pledge, I said I was under even a more solemn pledge than theirs: I was pledged to my Lord and Master to follow only, and in all things, that course which I believed to be His will for me; and that I believed it was His will, that, in the present state of society, I should abstain from strong drink.

By and by occasion arose, and I said to the managing partner of our factory, Richard Hewat Dunn, ‘We see that our Templar Lodges really do rescue some, and prevent some, but this does not extend above a certain class; might not we,

associated with others, have the same influence with some of our acquaintances ?' He said, 'I think we might.' 'Then,' said I, 'we ought to try : will you join me ?' He said, 'I will.' Thereupon I prepared a pledge of abstinence and obtained the willing signatures of my fellow-ministers, the schoolmasters, and a number of men in the best positions among us, of all professions. The results brought me much satisfaction, and I cherish the remembrance of thankofferings I received. People came from outside asking leave to join us. One was a young and irreproachable farmer, from a distance, who wished to be able in a word to give this conclusive answer when his acquaintances pressed him to join them. Another such outsider was a head gardener, for a similar reason, and to strengthen his own will.

Such reasons were more than enough for entering into a pledge ; and there were, besides, others of a scientific nature more than enough for the practice of abstinence. I have been a reader of everything of value on the subject, and an intent observer of human lives. The conclusion to which I have come, being a fact of my life and my final opinion, falls to be recorded, and it is this—While on the one hand abnormalities must be treated abnormally by those whose business it is, and re-

ligious ordinances dealt with by the Church ; on the other hand in normal life, whether we have regard to others, or only to ourselves, the less alcoholic drink the better, and none at all best of all.

For many years the General Assembly has instructed ministers to make special reference to temperance near the end of the year. I always obeyed, and on sixteen of these occasions dealt fully with the subject, and have received thanks from country lads and from county people, on their own account. On one such occasion, discountenancing the customary way in which a caller was welcomed in our homes, and comparing in fairness private houses with public, I said I had shared the hospitality of hotels anywhere in Britain, and on the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, and was grateful for their attention, but I had never once been offered drink. Those who wanted it had to ask for it, and those who asked for it had to pay for it. On the other hand, if one enters a friend's house here, it is not only presented to him, but pressed upon him. From among all the things with which the householder has provisioned his home he selects one by which to show his respect and friendship, and—incredible as it may seem—the article which he selects for this purpose is the one which a thousand

times more than all the rest has ruined bodies and souls of men—truly a strange way of expressing good wishes. In 1900 at the request of the Assembly's Committee on Temperance I wrote 'A New Year's Message: Being a Letter to a Friend.'

It was but yesterday that on a railway platform one came up to my wife overflowing with kindly feeling. Very soon he said, 'Do you mind when I was in jail, and the Doctor came to see me? It is the only time I ever shed tears in my life.' Long ago now, it was his first and last offence, and came of drink. He and a companion having had 'a drop' visited my neighbour's garden; and, being disappointed to find the fruit already gathered, they bethought them of the minister's henhouse. Early in the morning, when as yet we knew nothing of it, he was found with a bag of hens and ducks in his hands. Much as I had tried, I had always been unable to get speech with the lad, but now I could visit him and have a frank talk with him. He told me that some of them had once been found fault with from a pulpit, and he had never entered a church since. I was unable to overcome this, but he promised me to give up whisky, and he did for years.

Only one farm servant ever came to me to

borrow—we know the meaning of that word. He required a pound. Half an hour afterwards I met him in the street, his pipe going full blast. I went forward saying heartily: ‘Hullo! there you are! burning my pound in your pipe! I find no fault with smoking if one can afford it; but surely he should pay his debts and provide for the wants of his home before wasting money in this way.’

It must be near thirty years ago that my wife received an answer which she never tires repeating, and wishing it were heard everywhere in like circumstances. Betty Dalglish (in her day, not every one was Miss as in ours), whose brother lived with her, had been a sempstress and he a weaver; but now they were old and were of the kind that would not beg nor count the offer of alms a compliment. My wife was requested to assure Betty that we would be displeased if she did not frankly let us know when their savings were beginning to run short. The answer was that they had enough; ‘it’s no’ that we’re rich, but that our wants are few.’

One evening there came to me two young men who told me in mournful accents that Andrew Robertson’s leg had become very frail. I expressed my sympathy, and said I did not know that his leg was ill. Then it came out that it was

the wooden leg of Andrew, and they were proposing to honour him with a cork one. I said I was afraid there was no cork leg except in the song, but I would make inquiry, and learn the cost of something suitable, and then we should know better how much to subscribe. On an early day in Edinburgh I went into a shop in the North Bridge opposite the Post Office, and, lo, there was my Lord Haddington, who introduced me to his son, Lord Binning, and told me their business—some interesting little thing. So I told them my business. The Earl continued his transaction with the shopman, concluding thus, ‘and put Mr. Mair’s order to my account.’ It proved true that the only cork leg to be had was in the song.

CHAPTER V

EARLSTON CONTINUED

IN 1885 my University honoured me with the degree of Doctor of Divinity. The diploma was signed by twenty members of Senatus, of whom only one, Principal Pirie, had signed the former one (p. 41).

A few weeks later my learned and greatly respected neighbour, Mr. Maclaren, Mertoun, sat with me in the brougham on our way to a meeting of presbytery at Lauder. Abruptly, breaking silence, he said, 'You should write a book, Mair.' 'A book!' I said, 'what book?' 'Say, a volume of sermons.' 'Oh, sermons are a drug in the market.' After a little he said, 'Well, a book of Church law with annotations.' This ended in my saying the Assembly was at hand, and I would ask some honest friends who knew the subject and me, if they thought that such a book was wanted, and that I could do it. At the Assembly friends were unanimous, and were so decided that I felt this work was given me to do.

On the first day after my return home I began—not with chapter 1. I was fifty-five. Deducting six months for periods when it was laid aside for special parish work and holidays, I may say it occupied the leisure time in eighteen months, and was published immediately before the Assembly of 1887 under the full title: *A Digest of Laws and Decisions Ecclesiastical and Civil Relating to the Constitution, Practice, and Affairs of the Church of Scotland*. At the Commissioner's levee at that time my friend, Mr. T. G. Murray, came forward to thank me for the copy of the work I had sent him, adding the unconsciously amusing compliment, 'I looked it up for something I had not been able to find elsewhere, and, strange to say, I found it!' It is now in its third edition. Friends have been extremely curious to know why Mr. Maclaren should have proposed to me a law book, and whether I ever had a legal training, and so on. I never had any legal training. Beyond what he saw in our courts my friend knew no more, perhaps less, than I have told here. Both before and since, I have most faithfully attended the Church courts, and have never missed a General Assembly whether a member of it or not. I remember the days in which I there heard with awe a reference to the mysterious 'Pardovan,' an

authority just two hundred and one years old now. I had been accustomed to take an interest in the newspaper reports of the Court of Session and the House of Lords.

After the publication of the *Digest* I began, as may be supposed, to receive requests for advice. This has grown till it hardly fails for a day. I have written literally thousands of letters and had hundreds of consultations, on matters within Scotland and far furth of Scotland in variety absolutely unimaginable. Writing this sentence on 26th April, I find that since the month began there have been twenty-two week-days, and I have written twenty-two letters of advice and one telegram, and have had five consultations. I think it is in many ways exceedingly good for me; and it is always a pleasure for one to give such help as he can.

There hangs a tale by the Act known as Cunningham's Act (empowering vacant congregations to appoint a minister who is in a charge in certain other Churches). The records of 1885 bear that there was an overture from the presbytery of Earlston and another from that of Auchterarder, and that Dr. Cunningham moved the overture from Earlston—my overture. Behind the scenes I had tried in vain to show him that

mine was the best. At last we united in asking the opinion of the procurator, who promptly gave judgment for me. Then for the sake of Dr. Cunningham, who was so anxious to be the mover, I said to him that in presenting my overture I would confine myself to expounding the competency of the proposal, and leave the moving of it to him.

Deletion so as to be illegible had been the rule of the Church when anything stood in the records of an inferior court to the discredit of a person, which had been improperly introduced, or had not been established against him. A presbytery in the synod of Merse and Teviotdale, and also the synod itself, were ordered by the Assembly of 1886 to delete all their records in a case. The presbytery did no more than draw a line on the pages from corner to corner diagonally (actually drawing attention to the case!). This being upheld by the synod, Mr. Maclaren and I complained to the Assembly, and I was heard. A committee was appointed on the whole subject. Out of this came the Act instituting the 'Record Apart'; and more, for after sitting a year the committee were instructed to consider also whether any and what changes should be made in the procedure of the inferior courts in judicial cases. Out of this came the 'Act on Forms and

Procedure in Trial by Libel, and in Causes Generally' (1889). It was drafted by me, and with scarcely a touch from the committee was sent by the Assembly to presbyteries, approved by sixty-seven of them, and passed into law.

In 1887 the minister of Cross brought up an appeal from a decision of the presbytery of Lewis on a libel against him. This led to the appointment of a commission to visit the parish, and I was made chairman. We were also authorised to confer with the presbytery and to visit the other parishes. A Sabbath occurred while we were there, and our members were distributed among the churches. I took two diets at Stornoway. Mr. M'Laren of Fraserburgh officiated at Lochs, and when we were assembled there next day we were heart-stricken by his sudden death in the midst of us. He was an able, forceful, and hard-working minister.

The commissioners had been instructed to report to the November meeting of the Commission of Assembly, which was authorised to 'dispose of the case,' or make interim arrangements. It did dispose of the case by deposition, and the minister appealed to the Assembly. The appeal was doubtless incompetent. The Assembly, however, after four motions, recalled the sentence, and

itself took up the report of the commissioners. Against this thirty-two eminent members dissented. I was not a member, but heard the discussion, and there and then resolved that I would clear up the position and powers of the Commission of Assembly. Accordingly, as soon as I had leisure from parish work, I went with a reader of old writing, and two clerks (one of them my wife) to the Assembly's library, and read all the records of the Commission and whatever else was necessary; and then drew up and printed a very complete statement. It showed clearly that, not the Assembly, but the dissentients, had been right. Three years later the subject came up by overture, and finally a committee, with the procurator convener, was appointed to report. At his request the report was drawn up by me, and is substantially given in the *Digest*. We also revised the Act by which the Commission is annually appointed (1893).

At Earlston, union between the two United Presbyterian congregations was concluded in May 1887. The church which was thereby set free was so near my manse that a door through the boundary wall would bring them within thirty paces of each other. As is engraven upon it,

the church had been 'Rebuilt 1880,' and was admirably suited and situated for a church hall. This we greatly needed—all the more because of our church being at the other end of the village, nearly half a mile distant. After consultation with my elders when it came to be for sale, I bought it for us, and soon got the money. It was formally opened on 14th March 1888, and has proved a great boon.

In the spring of 1890, after a fortnight of influenza, I was called upon by Mr. Dunn, an able, quiet, and kind man, whose early death we all deeply mourned. He came to say that he and others thought I ought to have an assistant, and he added I was to take no thought about the salary. Such an interview leaves an indelible mark and a deep sense of gratitude. After a talk with our Dr. Young I gratefully agreed to the proposal, but made it a condition that I should pay half the salary. I was fortunate in my assistants—Mr. Kennedy, now minister of Eyemouth; Mr. Fergusson, now of Maxwell parish, Glasgow, who became my moderator's chaplain, and my nephew by marriage; Mr. Mackay, who died minister of Craigmore, Bute, just after by his exertions it had been erected into a parish; and Mr. Ramsay, now of St. Andrews, Orkney.

The new experience of preaching in the open air came to me as chaplain of the volunteers when they were encamped on Lamberton Moor in 1890. It added something to my knowledge of acoustics. I occasionally heard, when speaking strongly, a little echo of the speech, though there was no ordinary cause to account for it. No doubt the explanation was that the waves produced by the voice, being driven on against the elastic stagnant air, accumulated it to a density that caused an echo. One of my small publications was a sermon, *Our Banners*, preached in Earlston at a church parade of the volunteers in 1871 on 'In the name of our God we will set up our banners' (Psalm xx.). It was published by request and printed in Earlston.

I had received my commission to be honorary chaplain to the 6th Berwickshire Rifle Volunteer Corps in July 1870, and held the office till the age limit and the expiry of an extension of three years. In 1893 I was one of those on whom the Queen 'was graciously pleased to confer the Volunteer Officers' Decoration' (V.D.). This was pinned on my breast by Lady Minto at the Stobs encampment in July of that year—Lord Minto being Colonel Commanding South of Scotland Volunteer Brigade. The volunteers always had

from me the free use of the field in front of the manse for drill.

Insufficient accommodation in the church gave frequent occasion for remark. I had once spoken of it to the Earl's factor, but the veteran put me off with 'A fu' kirk's a fine cry to gang to the country wi'!' At last Robert Smith, church treasurer, and our principal merchant, came to me with a scheme of enlargement. After hearing an architect's suggestions for the old church, I concluded that it must be a new church on the same site, or nothing. I should say that Colonel Charles Hope and Mrs. Hope took possession of Cowdenknowes in 1883, and that he was ordained an elder some four years afterwards. They had listened with me to the architect, and now the colonel said, if I should decide for a new church, he and Mrs. Hope would give £500 each, and we could have stone from the Black Hill for the quarrying. This decided it. The proposal came first before the heritors—only the valued-rent heritors—on 5th September 1890. Lord Haddington was in the chair—never before nor since. They agreed to assess themselves for £1000—accepting a guarantee from some of us for the balance that might be required. The last Sabbath in the old

church was the day of the spring communion. The demolition began on the morrow, Monday, 2nd February 1891. It was strange—and some were disposed to take it as an approving omen—that on the Saturday when the church officer in his duties went to the church, he found the finial of the gable lying on the ground. It was of solid stone; its stem or neck was broken, without known cause. It lies now in the tower with other relics.

The laying of the foundation stone took place on Tuesday, 28th April, at four o'clock. The following particulars are taken from reports of the press. In the large company were ministers, friends, and neighbours, of various churches. The press mentions upwards of fifty by name. The Hundredth Psalm was sung, led by the precentor, Mr. Duff. Dr. Mair read Scripture 1 Chron. iii. 11-16, 1 Peter ii. 1-7, and prayed. Colonel Hope placed a casket in the cavity prepared under the stone, reading out its contents. The stone was laid by Mrs. Hope (in the east jamb of the entrance door). Dr. Mair placing his hand upon it said: 'In the faith of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God we lay this stone, we build this house, for the furtherance of His kingdom here, to the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'

Mr. Martin, Lauder, offered prayer ; Psalm cii. 14-18 (second version) was sung ; the Very Rev. Dr. Gloag delivered an address ; Psalm cxxii. 6-9 was sung ; and the benediction pronounced by Dr. Mair.

The new church was opened on Wednesday, 6th July 1892, the Very Rev. Dr. James MacGregor, St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, being the preacher. The architects were Hardy and Wight, Edinburgh ; and the builders William Rodger and Sons, Earlston. The cost was £3331. I had no difficulty in getting the money : all gave willingly. A third sum of £500 came from Australia, from William Weatherly, son of a former elder. A list of the givers, without the sums, is in the presbytery's safe.

Great pains had been taken in the choice of a bell. My wife and I went to hear some that were named to us by the bell-founder, and decided to have ours like one at Lancaster—costing, I think, £80. The founders put it in its place at a few shillings under £90. On its arrival when stripped of its encasements I got a painful surprise by the sight of my name embossed upon it. This may be the practice, but so ill could I bear it that I have only now on inquiry learned the complete inscription, viz., ‘ William Mair, D.D., Minister,

1891'; also, 'John Taylor and Co., Founders, Loughborough, England.' I may say the inscription on the old bell is 'Soli. Deo. Gloria. Jan. Burgerhuys Me. Fecit. 1609.' It now lies silent in the tower—its day's work done, its place taken by one with louder and more solemn call. The first service of the new bell was to toll at the death of the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, 20th January 1892.

Before the building of the organ was reached I had read up the subject of organs, and the specifications for it were drawn up in my room along with the representative of the builders, Brindley and Foster, and the organist of the neighbouring parish of Melrose, Mr. Crookes. It cost £295, and is a sweet-toned instrument and admirably suitable.

It was between the Assemblies of 1893 and 1894 that the increase of the membership of the General Assembly and the enlargement of the hall took place, but the subject would be too great an interruption here and must be taken by itself.

Early in 1894 signs appeared, though not for a time taken seriously, that yet another malady had marked me for a prey. Certain muscles would not do duty without some degree of twinge. More

and more of them became affected, and with greater severity. The labours connected with the Assembly Hall did harm. A sound was in my head like the rush of distant waters. Health was declining, and in November I visited Dr. Heron Watson, who said: 'I am sorry to say you have got anæmic gout, and you are not at all in a good way. You ought not to be here: you are not fit to travel.' Within half an hour I accidentally met a friend who, speaking from knowledge, urgently advised me to communicate with Dr. Keightley, Brook Street, London. This I did. This doctor also spoke gravely, but became the means of my recovery. In about a year the illness had passed away. I think, for the sake of those who must give particular attention to such matters, I ought to mention one simple prescription that I found (and continue to find) of the first importance for myself and all whom I know to have adopted it: drink nothing at meals; drink a pint at a time of hot water two or three times a day (the first an hour before breakfast), not hotter than can be drunk continuously, say one hundred and twenty-four degrees; the more nearly empty the stomach then is the better, but the next meal at least an hour distant.

Having said so much of past ill-health, it would

be inexcusable if, before finally passing from the subject, I did not tell that all has been followed by present good health. This has come gradually till for some time I have had no trouble, and there is a good understanding between my health and me. And that is not all, but my hearing is good ; and without spectacles I can now again read the smallest type in newspapers with only a little effort, and the type of their leaders with ease. Five times I have been taken out of the jaws of death ; five times my lease of life has been renewed. Every time it has been felt that life is a gift for the service of the Giver ; every time (except in College days) I have seemed to hear His voice saying : ' I have more work for thee, go on again.' I have never been left in doubt as to what the work was.

For once I was glad not to be at home—I was at the Assembly—when my old mare died. When she and I were younger we rejoiced in a ride at racing pace in some unobserved field. A beauty in form and colour, faultless, and of fine action, she helped me ungrudgingly and well from her sixth year to eight-and-twenty. Many, many a mile we had travelled together, trusted and trusting. I was much struck on one occasion by

an ostler's sympathy, and his way of expressing it. My wife and I were on a three weeks' driving tour for holiday. When I put the mare in the hands of the ostler at Dumfries on a Saturday afternoon, I said: 'Be kind to her: she has been on the road for a fortnight.' 'Do you mean to tell me she hasna been in her ain stable a' that time?' 'I do.' 'Preserve us!' he said, 'it's eneuch to brack the hert o' ony horse.' When we left home, for the first two or three mornings she had been for going back the way we came, but afterwards lost all interest; and when on our return we were approaching home I did feel sorry that she took no notice of familiar roads.

In 1895 Earlston had a great gala day over Thomas the Rhymer. Rhymer's Land had belonged to Charles Wilson of the factory. His widow, about to join her family in Australia, besought me to act for her and try, where she had long failed, to get her co-trustee to sell. With much difficulty I at last got Rhymer's Land brought to the market; and then, in co-operation with my good friend Mr. Dunn, the attention of the Border Counties Association was called to the Tower, and an arrangement was made to sell it to them separately. The association came to inaugurate their tenure on 2nd August 1895. A triumphal arch near the

railway station bade visitors ' Welcome to Earlston,' and on the reverse side bore ' Thomas Rhymer, 1295—1895.' Banners streamed on every side. A brass band discoursed music. The principal speaker at the ceremony was Mr. Wallace Bruce, late consul for the United States of America at Edinburgh, who delivered a powerful oration. A choir sang ' The Broom o' the Cowdenknowes.' Mrs. Hope, Cowdenknowes, then unveiled a tablet inserted in the west wall of the Tower with the following inscription :—

TOWER OF THOMAS THE RHYMER
WITH COTTAGES ADJOINING
THE PROPERTY OF THE
EDINBURGH BORDER COUNTIES ASSOCIATION
1894.

' Farewell, my father's ancient tower,
A long farewell,' said he ;
' The scene of pleasure, pomp, or power,
Thou never more shalt be.'—*Scott*.¹

Near this spot is a very different memorial of a less famous, but yet very remarkable man. He is reputed to have been of great bodily strength ; he evidently had great strength of character and depth of piety. Just across the Leader from Rhymer's Tower there is a tiny scrap of the eccle-

¹ *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott*, 1851, p. 533.

siastical parish of Earlston, on which stood a small cottage. At the gable towards Earlston there is a grave, over which is a flat tombstone resting on four short pedestals, and bearing the following inscription—too worn for me to read, but distinctly engraven on the memory of my informant, who also gave it to me in writing :—

At Craigsford Jany. 20th 1724. This is the Through and place designed for the body of James Blaikie, Wright in Craigsford, and Marion Sclater, his Spouse, built by himself, wishing that God in whose hand my life is may raise me by the greatness of His power to a glorious resurrection, and that this stone, when I view it may remind me of death and eternity and the dreadful torments which the wicked endure. O that God may enable me to have some foretaste of the sweet enjoyment of His presence that my soul may be filled with love to Him who is altogether lovely, that I may go through the valley of the shadow of death leaning on Him in whom all my hope is. So strengthen me, O Lord, who hath done to me great things more than I can express.

In this grave dug by himself and lined with masonry he performed his devotions daily. It is said that this worthy man also kept by him a coffin for himself, but that for any pressing need he would sell it, and thus when his own need came there was none.

At the usual time, in 1896, I received intimation

that the ex-moderators had agreed to nominate me for moderator of next General Assembly, and hoped I would accept. This raised for me the question of sufficient strength—and for others also, for when, as soon as the time of secrecy expired, I told Colonel Hope, he almost took it for granted that I would decline. I said I had accepted, proceeding on the experience of what I had been enabled to do, as when David reasoned from his successful encounter with the lion and the bear. He replied, like himself, ‘ Oh then, we must stand by you.’ And he did.

When the nomination had been announced I had the pleasure of receiving many honours and kindnesses. First a fine illuminated address from my fellow officers in the 2nd Berwickshire Volunteer Battalion King’s Own Scottish Borderers. It bears thirty-seven signatures—at all times a pleasure to look upon. The kirk-session of Ardoch sent me an extract minute of congratulation. My congregation, selecting my birthday for the occasion, presented me with court dress and moderator’s robes at a great meeting very affecting in its cordiality. At the same time my assistants gave me a pretty and serviceable manuscript case, which was my constant companion at the Assembly. My presbytery

at its May meeting gave me a complimentary dinner with friends whom they invited.

After six years of visiting the presbyteries a 'Commission on the Religious Condition of the People' (Principal Lang, convener) gave in their final report in 1896, in which they presented an elaborate general review. This year they called attention to the extremely unsatisfactory state of the parish of Carnoch in the presbytery of Dingwall. The Church would seem to have lost sight of its power to 'purge out' 'insufficient ministers' (1690, c. 5). At any rate, I had never heard such a thing mooted till I called attention to it in the *Digest*. The Assembly declared their desire that presbyteries should deal firmly with cases of proved inefficiency, and appointed a committee of which I was a member to advise with the presbytery. The minister was libelled for insufficiency, which was found proven. At next Assembly (1897) he demitted his charge, and was suspended from the ministry *sine die*.

Another important piece of work came to me out of that Commission's report. They had said: 'There can be little doubt that in some instances the boundaries of presbyteries might be rearranged with advantage.' Accordingly, the

Assembly appointed a committee, and made me convener, to ascertain the views of presbyteries and synods, report our opinion of their suggestions, and make such suggestions as seemed deserving of consideration. We reported to three successive Assemblies. In all we had before us almost a score of proposals. Each of them had been laid before all the parties interested ; and none of them of any consequence could be carried out. The total result was the transference of two parishes to other presbyteries. None the less the business of the committee involved much labour and the exercise of no little considerateness and care.

In the University of Edinburgh, in the beginning of 1896, I delivered five lectures on Church Law, at the request of a committee of the Church. Part of the first lecture I published under the title *Jurisdiction in Matters Ecclesiastical*. The Preface bears that I believe the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland are nearer to each other in their views on the subject than they suppose ; and says that my design is to promote good understanding and friendly relations. The pamphlet refers to the Confession of Faith as the law of the State, as well as of the Church, declaring that ‘ the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church

hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church officers distinct from the civil magistrate.' It says that all Christian Churches claim to possess jurisdiction from the royal prerogative of their Divine Head ; and that besides possessing this power a Church may in addition possess jurisdiction (in the legal sense) if the State pleases and the Church accepts, so that its judgments shall be held final by the State. And it quoted Principal Hutton (*Scotsman*, 21st October 1895) as maintaining that the judgments of voluntary Churches ought to be held final. This is the position in which the Church of Scotland is.

A committee of Assembly had been working with committees of the other two principal Churches in the compilation of a hymn book for all, but in 1896 a motion by Dr. John MacLeod to withdraw was carried. Next year overtures brought up the subject again, and on the motion of Dr. Alison co-operation was resumed, and I was put on the committee then appointed, which made me its convener. I gave in the final report in 1898. The result of our work is the *Church Hymnary*. Some years ago the Assembly appointed me one of the trustees of the property.

In 1897 the Assembly's Committee on Legislation were directed *inter alia* 'to continue their

endeavours to have suitable provisions framed with a view to removing any misapprehensions which may exist in regard to the powers and jurisdiction of the Church.' I was convener of the sub-committee in charge of this branch—'the Constitution of the Church'—and we submitted to next Assembly a 'Draft Bill to Declare the Jurisdiction of the Church of Scotland.' The Bill was approved by the Assembly, and is further referred to by me under Reunion.

In 1897 the Assembly appointed me convener of a Committee on Discipline in Kirk-Sessions. In answer to queries, kirk-sessions had expressed considerable dissatisfaction on various grounds, and on none more than the diversity of practice. We were appointed to consider the whole subject. The result was the Act passed in 1902 'to stand part of the Form of Process.' *Inter alia* it did away with the perpetuation of certain cases in the records.

The year 1898 was the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary (fifth jubilee) of the completion of the Shorter Catechism and its approval by the General Assembly. Attention was called to this by Professor Mitchell when giving in the report of the Committee on the Minutes of the West-

minster Assembly a year before. The result was a joint commemoration service on our invitation held in St. Giles' on the afternoon of Sabbath, 23rd May. The Lord High Commissioner was present. There was a crowded congregation. An outline of the proceedings may be of interest. After the singing of Psalm c. prayer was offered by me. I then made some introductory remarks and read an interesting letter from Professor Mitchell, unable to be present on account of his health. Subsequent devotions were reading Deut. iv. 1-10, and singing Psalm cxxiv. (second version), Psalm lxxvii., Psalm xix. 1-7, Par. ii. Addresses were delivered on The Catechism in its Historical Aspect, by Dr. MacGregor, St. Cuthbert's; in its Doctrinal Aspect, by Professor Orr; and in its Devotional Aspect, by Principal Rainy. The benediction was pronounced by Dr. Whyte, Free Church Moderator.

In Earlston the ministers were on frank and agreeable terms with each other. Mr. Keechie was in the West Church till it was closed at the union; in the other, Mr. Finlayson, who died while still a young man, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Taylor. I was present at the ordination of these three; and when Mr. Brown left for Kilmarnock, in February 1901, I went to

his induction and spoke at a soiree. At the union of the congregations Mr. Kechie was retired, and on his leaving Earlston two years later it was in my church that he preached a farewell sermon on 5th May 1889. In winter 1888-9 Mr. Thompson and I held a series of evangelistic meetings in the Corn Exchange, which was crowded. On the first Sabbath of worship in our new church he conducted the evening service. Since 1893 the congregations have worshipped together on the evening of the half-yearly communions, in the churches alternately. At the yearly distribution of coals, etc., by my kirk-session we had, for some years before I left, shown our list to the other session for suggestions. When the *Church Hymnary*, the joint work of three Presbyterian churches, was published (1898) we selected a number of the new hymns for practice by the choirs together, under their precentor and our organist, concluding with a most successful public recital, the proceeds of which went to defray the cost of the choir books, etc.

Earlston is proud of its 'Reading Room and Library,' and with reason, so that I cannot overlook it. The institution owed its origin to Major Baillie in 1852, and surely no other was ever begun and nursed in a more inexpensive way. By and by it required a house for itself, rented

from Lord Haddington at five shillings a year. This was now to be enlarged by heightening, a room provided for games, and shelves for 3500 volumes, and more to come. For this purpose a bazaar was held in 1898. On the first day it was opened by Colonel Hope, and on the second by me. It brought £374. 'The Major's Tea' was a homely New Year festival at which the major always met the retiring committee of management on the night of the subscribers' first meeting for the year.

When I had assistants at Earlston there were many things affecting speech in which I tried to help them. Conversing on one occasion with Mr. Mackay, I said of some faults they seemed to be so general, and the cause of them so little understood that I was almost tempted to go into print. 'I really wish you would,' he said; and thereupon I began my little book *Speaking*, published in 1900, and now in the fourth edition. When first published a Liverpool gentleman, Sir W. P. Hartley, ordered about one thousand copies for presentation to the ministers of the Church of which he was a member; and he was so good as to send me a great number of the letters he received from them.

Deeply, and for a long time, convinced of the need and importance of it, I promoted an overture by members of the General Assembly of 1901, that the synodal committees in preparing a scheme for the guidance of presbyteries in their annual examination of students of Divinity ‘ confine it to the English version of the Old and New Testaments, the Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Directory for Public Worship.’ This was agreed to ; but somehow two years passed without anything being done by these committees. Then the Assembly appointed me convener of a special committee for the purpose. Our scheme was laid before next Assembly (1904), approved, and ‘ cordially recommended ’ to presbyteries. As lately as 1909 the Committee for Education of the Ministry recommended that the attention of presbyteries should be called to it, and that it should be printed annually in the *Year-Book*. Their report was approved, with special mention of ‘ the paramount importance of the study of Holy Scripture,’ and of all ‘ suggestions made in furtherance of this object.’ The scheme is now in the *Year-Book*.

One hundred and fifty years ago the Church passed an ‘ Act against Simoniactal Practices,’

embodying an order that presbyteries should read it to every person before he is licensed to preach and to every candidate for a settlement before they take any steps thereto. In 1899 the presbytery of Glasgow overtured for the repeal of that part which required the reading, and in 1900 seventy presbyteries were reported as approving. I pointed out, however, that if the Act with its severe penalties was to continue in force, care ought to be taken that those whom it concerned should be well informed of it; and further that it ought to be adapted to present circumstances. I therefore moved for a committee to revise the Act. This was carried, and I was made convener. We proposed a substitute for the reading, which is now law; and also an 'Act on Offences in the Election and Appointment of Ministers.' Thus we have the origin of the Act so entitled (1904, viii.). It has to be read to vacant congregations; and the attention of students must be called to it at their licensing.

Earlston, on 29th November 1900, welcomed home its volunteers from the Boer War in Africa, with a torchlight procession in the afternoon and a public meeting in the evening.

Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901,

between the hours of 6 and 7 P.M., and on 2nd February, the day of the funeral, a religious service was held in our church. Along with me were Mr. Brown of the United Presbyterian congregation, and Mr. Ramsay, my assistant. On 27th January my text was 'I will give thee a crown of life.' I wish I could have given that sermon here.

This year on 27th January died John Hewitt, my faithful servant of thirty-one years, at the age of sixty-one.

On the 1st day of June 1902 peace was proclaimed in Africa. On the 8th I preached from Isaiah xlv. 7, 'I make peace.'

The 24th day of this month and year is memorable for the universal consternation and grief caused by the announcement that the King was seriously ill from appendicitis, and that the coronation appointed for the 26th was postponed. People had not the heart to fulfil the King's desire that festivities which had been arranged should go on, and it was done only to a small extent. In our case it was confined to the children. On the 29th my text was 'Be still and know that I am God' (Psalm xlv. 10). The coronation took place on Saturday, 9th August. Moved by the profoundly religious and solemn character of the ceremony, I preached on the

Sunday from 'Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord' (Psalm xxxiii. 12).

In our presbytery there were three 'Small Livings,' that is, under £200 a year, and, as in some other parts of the country, an effort, which proved successful, was commenced to provide capital that would raise them to that sum. In the beginning of August a three days' bazaar was held in aid of the enterprise. It was opened on the first day by Dr. Russell, the Right Rev. the Moderator of the previous Assembly, on his way to attend the coronation.

On the last Lord's Day of this year—which I alone knew would be the last year whose ending I would see at Earlston—I took for text 'An end is come, the end is come, it watcheth for thee' (Ezek. vii. 6).

On the first Lord's Day of 1903 another preached, but, after having told my elders in the morning, I said from the pulpit that there was an important matter of which I thought it due to my people that they should first hear from myself—I had formed the resolution to demit my charge, and the presbytery would probably release me early in June.

For the last time in Earlston I administered

the Lord's Supper on 1st February—text, 'What shall we then say to these things' (Rom. viii. 31).

At the giving up of the Bible Class they and the Sabbath School teachers invited my wife and me to an entertainment in the hall on the evening of my birthday, and there presented her with two silver-gilt embossed fruit spoons, and me with a handsome highly-stuffed easy chair. I had to show them on the spot how it would serve its purpose !

On 11th March my wife drove off in a finely-horsed carriage and pair belonging to Mr. Smart of our hotel to Edinburgh to be presented on the morrow to the King and Queen holding Court at Holyrood. Those who had already been presented (as I was when moderator) were not desired to come. Mrs. Mair was presented by Lady Balfour of Burleigh.

My last sermon in Earlstoun was on 7th June 1903, from the text 'Our Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter i. 1 and iii. 18). I must recall the line that the sermon took :—

This is the last time that I shall address you as your minister ; and when we call to mind that this house was erected to the glory and for the worship of God and of His Son 'Our Saviour

Jesus Christ'; and that this pulpit is for the delivery of their message; and that I am called to occupy it for that purpose; I am sure you will agree with me that an occasion so solemn should not be used for speaking of me, or of you, or of what we have been to each other, but of our Saviour, and of what He has been, and is, and may be, to us. The words of the text both begin and end this epistle.

Even leaving out of account what we find in Scripture, there is perhaps no word so often uttered with profound emotion in distress or in thankfulness as *save—saved*. In all kinds of extreme danger to life [examples]—‘Oh save him!’ ‘Thank God, he is saved!’

Now above all things, the universal conscience and experience, and the Word of God, teach that there is nothing from which man so greatly needs saving as SIN, and nothing from which it is so difficult to save him as SIN. It was this that brought Christ from heaven. He could not do it in heaven, and no one on earth could do it but He.

Unless one knows himself to be a sinner, and knows what it is to be a sinner in the presence of God as Scripture teaches, and what a curse sin is to the world, he cannot know what an unspeakable gift the Saviour was and is, or why He came,

or what His words and deeds mean. Everything relating to Him must be seen in the light of His errand to the world. Let us look at the execution, the working out, of that errand :

1. Those parts of it in which we have no hand I shall not dwell upon : His obedience, sacrifice, resurrection, intercession.

2. Think of the parts in which we have a hand, classifying the result to His people in these three stages—brought *in*, brought *through*, brought *home*.

(1) Brought *in* : This the work of the shepherd who went after the *one* [hill, dale, calm, storm]. It was willing ; men not so—will turn a deaf ear, get behind a shut door. [Plead in His name : my last.]

(2) Brought *through* : Constant attention on His part and ours—difficulties, hindrances, encouragements [exceeding great and precious promises—quote examples of them].

(3) Brought *home* : There repose, comfort, love, unhindered service—what a home ! Rev. xxi., etc., etc. For ever with the Lord—met to part no more.

Concluded with repeating Num. vi. 24-26.

The hymn which immediately preceded the sermon was, ‘ Tell me the old, old story ’—an

indirect appeal to me the singing of which was overpowering.

Next day at a meeting of the kirk-session (with whom I never for a moment had any but the happiest relations) the following resolution was put on record ; and an extract of it sent to me is one of my valued papers :—

Considering that the presbytery will to-morrow grant the request of the Very Revd. Dr. Mair to be released from his charge here of thirty-four years' duration, the kirk-session resolved to put on record their high appreciation of his faithful ministry, and of the many great services he has rendered to the parish, and the expression of their sincere personal esteem and affection for him. It is their heart's desire that he may be spared to add much more to his well-known services to the Church of Scotland. The clerk was instructed to give an extract of this minute to Dr. Mair.

On the following day, Tuesday, the presbytery suspended its sitting that I (and some others) might attend the funeral of Andrew Murdison—my last act as minister of Earlston ; and on my return to the meeting the resolution loosening me from my charge was passed. When my letter of demission came first before the presbytery, among the kind things said one was that they would always send me as an elder to the Assembly ;

and this honour I have ever since enjoyed. I became eligible by admission to the kirk-session of Mayfield, Edinburgh.

On the Friday evening a fine public meeting was held at which my wife was presented with the parting gift of a silver rose bowl, while a sum of money was given me with which to procure such a memento as I might prefer. I commissioned Tom Scott, R.S.A., to do for me a painting of the church and of the manse, and they now adorn our walls, and are objects of unfailing interest.

The next day, Saturday, 13th June, a carriage from Cowdenknowes came to the manse door to take us over to Fens for some days' rest with our kind friends, the Fairbairns, and at the same moment came Dr. Young and Mr. Sinclair, banker, to our great comfort. And so, leaving the open door and the key in their care, and shaking hands with them, as if with all Earlston, we departed ; nor have we ever faced the trial of returning.

I desire to say—and I may as well say it at this point as anywhere else—that from first to last through life I have received an enormous amount of kindness. It has tended to humility, and has kept alive the spirit of thankfulness to God and man. It has nourished the spirit of showing kindness to others, and has doubled the

pleasure of it. ‘ Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.’

It has got on my mind that I cannot more fittingly take leave of Earlston than by the mention of some of its boys of my time, who will carry its traditions further down, and who give promise of adding to its fame.

First in order of time is George W. Alexander, a licentiate of the then United Presbyterian Church. After having been clerk of the School Boards, first of Glasgow and then of Edinburgh, he is now Assistant Secretary of the Scottish Education Department.

Next is the parish minister of Tweedsmuir, William S. Crockett, a popular writer. His favourite subjects have been the Borders, the country of Scott, and the great Wizard himself. His first book (1893) was *Minstrelsy of the Merse*, and now we are promised his thirteenth, on the Originals of characters in the Waverley novels. He is also convener of a committee of Assembly, revising and continuing Hew Scott’s *Fasti Ecclesiæ Scoticanæ*.

Of younger lads is James Lochhead, M.A., B.Sc., M.D., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), who carried all before him in the medical classes of Edinburgh University, and, as gold medallist, was foremost of his

year. He is now specialising in surgery in Edinburgh.

John W. E. Steedman is a solicitor in Edinburgh, a church worker, and secretary of the Church Union Association.

It seems that on one occasion in my Bible Class I had advised them, when they had entered on any proper undertaking, or life-employment, not to let difficulty, disappointment, offence, or the like, discourage them, or lead them to go after something else; but, if they could make a living at all, to 'stick in' the firmer, because no good comes of changing about. I little thought that some years afterwards one of them, Andrew Murdison, when visiting his people, would be coming to tell me how prosperous in business he was in America—drawing a very large salary—and how the secret of it was, that in a time of stress he had remembered my words when all his acquaintances were doing just what I had dissuaded my class from. That crisis in trade followed the suppression of the Riel rebellion of 1885 from which Andrew had just returned to his place in Toronto. He came back in a condition that too plainly proved how terribly severe the nine months' campaigning had been. He had never himself been a 'volunteer,' but had stepped heroically

into the place of a companion who was in ill-health.

Stewart Paterson was well advanced in George Watson's College, Edinburgh, when during the South African War, with the full consent of his parents, in January 1901, he joined the South African Constabulary, and on his eighteenth birthday was doing sentry duty over Boer prisoners. His knowledge of German was in his favour, and he soon acquired the Taal. He has risen in the forces, occupying positions of trust, is now in the Transvaal Police next to the commandant, and is also public prosecutor in the native courts. He has just been put in charge of the town and large district of Potchefstroom.

Yet another lad I must take note of, though not a native of Earlston. Walter Wight had come from the West apprenticed to one of our drapers, and he was a member of my Bible Class. He began to show symptoms of chest affection, and was told he could not have health in employment so entirely within doors. After refreshing at home he was led to the study of medicine. It was found that at Earlston he had been so keeping up his education that he was successful in the examination for entering the medical classes at Edinburgh University. These he passed through

with honours. By and by he took the place temporarily of a Scotch doctor in Natal. The Boer war came on, and he went into the hospitals. Then he was offered the appointments of Railway Medical Officer and Resident Civil Surgeon at Waterval Boven in the Transvaal. Now comes that which makes him so interesting to me. His father wrote me in 1905, and, after narrative, proceeded thus: 'The main object, sir, of my writing to you is to say that we are convinced that Walter's falling under your evangelical preaching and influence—following up his home life—has resulted in lifelong good to him; and as practical evidence of robust Christian character, he has bought this very good house for the lifelong use of his parents.'

CHAPTER VI

AFTER EARLSTON

A SCHOOL playmate and I, when we were just over thirteen, had parted to follow our several ways in life, and immediately lost sight of each other till my name was published as moderator-designate. Then he wrote inquiring, and revealing himself as a master house-painter in Edinburgh—George Brechin. I always missed seeing him, but, needless to say, my house passed through his hands before I took up my abode in it. Thus it happened that one fine afternoon in June on my first arrival at the gate he was coming forward to attend to some finishing touches, and we met—neither of us knowing the other—the first time for sixty years, and sat down together, two old men. ‘Doesna that road mind ye,’ he said, ‘o’ the road where we used to play bools?’ That night I had the very agreeable feeling of being really retired, relieved. But it could not last long. Though enjoying release from fixed obligatory duties and their responsibility, I have been as fully occupied as ever.

Already the publisher had called for the third edition of the *Digest*. Committees and sub-committees, great and small, continued as before. Correspondence flowed on. Reunion of Presbyterianism claimed me with a clearness that could not be gainsaid. Lay evangelists under training come to me for help in reading. The book *Speaking* brings fathers with stammering boys. And so on.

Since the institution of the Church's Men's Home in Edinburgh in 1904, I have been convener of the local sub-committee in charge of it. At the end of a lease we were under the necessity of finding a larger and a better place. I discovered one that was admirable—Malta House, Malta Terrace, Stockbridge—and determined that it should be purchased. The price and the cost of repairs, all paid, came to £2415; and of that sum about £2400 was found by me. This was now the sixth time of my raising sums of money—five times having been in the special service of the Church. We removed to Malta House in September 1908, and a month or two afterwards it was formally opened by Lord Rosebery, who in his happy way said: 'He deserves the blue gown of king's bedesman. He is a bedesman of his own King, and will have his reward.'

The manner of the Church's entering on what is called 'Social Work,' may some day be of interest. When the Assembly of 1903 were discussing their deliverance on the report of the Home Mission Committee, Mr. Oswald, one of the ministers of Perth, and chaplain to the jail, moved an addendum to the effect that the committee should consider whether the Church should take up such work. The question was remitted to a committee constituted of some members appointed by the Assembly, and others sent by the Committees on Temperance, Life and Work, and Home Missions. When this composite committee met, Dr. James Paton, St. Paul's, Glasgow, convener of the Temperance Committee (in which he had done noble work), submitted an outline of a scheme remarkable for its completeness in substance and detail. It formed part of this composite committee's report in 1904. A Committee on Social Work was appointed, Dr. Paton convener. He was of good, manly presence, full of zeal and energy, and an eloquent speaker. His countenance bespoke heartiness, readiness, courage. He was really the leader in this work. But in the convenership of two such committees his zeal consumed him. In this new committee he was able to hold that office for one year only. After

a few days of an unforeseen and painful illness, he was called home at the age of sixty-three. An obituary tribute was paid to him by the Assembly of 1907. He was succeeded by the Master of Polwarth. The scheme has prospered. We have now eighteen institutions of various kinds devoted to the work.

There were not a few who thought that this was not proper work for the Church. In their opinion the Church should occupy itself with the preaching of Gospel truth, which would remove the causes leading to the evils that the scheme proposed to deal with. If the opinion of the congregations and of the public may be taken on such a point, the remarkable way in which they have welcomed the movement may be held decisive. While all regard the primary and principal duty of the Church as being to preach the Word, they see in this enterprise not only Gospel teaching, but practice, and guardianship, directed more particularly to lift up the fallen and rescue the perishing. The scheme would appear to have a great future, though it seems to me that a good deal of the evil with which it is trying to grapple would be prevented if a Christian State were to apply itself firmly to some of the causes.

During my ministry I examined every manual

I heard of for young communicants, and never found one that I could put in their hands with profit—for such reasons as: too theological in matter and language; superabundant in matter, which tended to confuse; wanting in simplicity and directness of speech and in immediate spiritual bearing on the present purpose. For years I cherished the thought of publishing. In a sharp attack of pleurisy which I had about the middle of January five months before leaving Earlston, I said to the doctor I should like to be spared to do this thing. At last in 1906 I published *My Young Communicant*. I need not say I sent the doctor a copy. Many thousands of it have gone out.

At the request of the Committee on Life and Work I wrote a sketch of the Life of Dr. Gray of Auchterless to be prefixed to a republication of his *Talks with Our Farm Servants*. I mention it because his life—himself an old farm servant—was so unusual and interesting, and his *Talks* of such surpassing excellence (R. and R. Clark, Edinburgh, 1906).

Responsibility of presbyteries for vacant parishes was the subject of an overture from the presbytery of Ayr, and a committee was appointed with me as convener. Our report to next Assembly (1907) was approved.

A historical step had been taken by the General Assembly of 1903 regarding religious instruction in public schools. The subject was brought up by overtures from four synods. The movement had its origin in '*An Appeal to the Scottish Churches and Scottish People*, by a Presbyterian of the Scottish Episcopal Church, with an Introductory Note by Professor Cooper.' The author became known as Mr. Rollo, Glasgow. The *Appeal* was a powerful plea for joint action and *inter alia* for a common Catechism acceptable to all the Reformed Churches in Scotland. The overtures were remitted to a committee by the Assembly, in terms moved by me, 'with power to invite the co-operation of other branches of the Reformed Churches in Scotland in the consideration of the whole subject presented in the overtures, and to report to next Assembly.'

Representatives of eleven Churches and of the Association for the Inspection of Religious Instruction met in January 1904, and requested each of these bodies to nominate not more than five members to a joint-committee. This committee *inter alia* appointed a sub-committee to prepare 'a simple Catechism embracing such facts and doctrines of Christianity as might be acceptable to all branches of the Reformed Church in

Scotland.' This sub-committee numbered fourteen, and embraced members of five Churches. Their names and designations are given in the Prefatory Note to the Catechism. At our first meeting, Principal Rainy, on my motion, was appointed chairman. The Principal, from engrossment in church affairs and also latterly from the state of his health, was never able to take the chair, which at the request of the meeting was occupied by me. We had upwards of fifty meetings of two hours each. They could not be excelled in harmony, and were much enjoyed by us. When we were prepared, our work was reported for revision to the committee that appointed us, and then to the full conference, and was published under the title *The School Catechism : Issued by a Conference of Members of the Reformed Churches in Scotland*, 1908. The conference appointed trustees of the property, and these at their first meeting appointed me their chairman.

This Catechism consists of sixty-four questions, as compared with one hundred and seven in the Shorter Catechism. It now forms part of the Scheme of Religious Instruction in the Provincial Training Colleges. The Rev. Dr. Graham, Kalimpong, told me that it had been a godsend for his far-famed St. Andrew's Homes there. The

missionaries of the Church of Scotland have translated it into Nepali, and of the United Free Church of Scotland into Kafir. The present home sale is 29,000 a year.

In 1908 the thirteenth International Congress on the observance of the Lord's Day was held at Edinburgh on the 6th, 7th, and 8th October, during the Scottish National Exhibition, and on its grounds. Seven Churches in Scotland were represented, and in all sixty-eight Churches and Societies. I was on the executive committee, and on the sub-committee entrusted with publishing. *The World's Rest Day* is the title of the book which reports the proceedings, very fully—a treasury of valuable matter—price half a crown.

The subject of the individual cup at the Communion first came before the Assembly in 1907 by an overture from the presbytery of Glasgow. They came asking a declaration of the law, in consequence of that mode having been adopted in three parishes within their bounds. A committee, of which I was a member, was appointed to report on the whole question. Already seventeen parishes were using only this mode, while in four others there was a separate diet of worship, or

season, for it. There were rather more instances in the United Free Church, and a still greater proportion in the Congregational Union. An exhaustive report was presented by the General Assembly of 1909. The deliverance of the Assembly expressed most serious dislike and discouragement of the novel practice; but in view of the information on various aspects of the subject submitted in the report, they did not feel justified in forbidding it; but required that in every case those who desired the old mode should be as conveniently provided for as before; and charged ministers and presbyteries to see that the harmony of congregations was not disturbed over this holy ordinance.

The years have brought my narrative to a great national sorrow. In 1910, on the night of Friday, the sixth day of May, at a quarter before twelve o'clock, King Edward VII. died, beloved of all his people. All the nations joined in the lament. For, honoured, admired and trusted, he had also won universal affection as the great Peacemaker.

Never had there been such a gathering in the history of Christ's Church, or of the Kingdom of God on earth as assembled at Edinburgh in 1910

under the name of the World Missionary Conference. More than twelve hundred men and women came from all parts of the world, delegated by one hundred and fifty-nine bodies (of which forty-six were British). It was confined to bodies having agents in the foreign field and expending on foreign missions not less than £2000 annually. The conference opened on Tuesday, 14th June, and closed on Thursday, 23rd. As a specimen in the distribution of hospitality I may say it fell to our lot to entertain a lady from Kansas city delegated by the Women's Foreign Missionary Society Methodist Episcopal South, her husband a minister of that Church, and a reverend delegate from the S.P.G., England—a most interesting company.

While correcting my proofs in the middle of March 1911, I hear with delight, all around me, from pulpit and press, the praises of the 'Authorised Version' of the Scriptures in English. This is its tercentenary. Bible Societies—in Scotland, the 'National' (which this year has attained its jubilee, and been congratulated by the King); in Ireland, the 'Hibernian'; in the United States, the 'American'; in England and the rest of the world, the 'British and Foreign'—backed by the official heads of the Protestant Churches, invited ministers

to call attention to this book of blessing. On Tuesday, the 21st March, King George received a deputation who, under the auspices of the Tercentenary Celebration Committee, desired to present him with an address and a specially bound Bible. On the address were sixty-five signatures, and of the subscribers forty-eight were present. This deputation, headed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, can scarcely have had a parallel in our annals—so comprehensive of the branches of the Christian Church, learned institutions, and portions of the empire. The reception took place in the throne-room, where the King stood before the throne. The address having been read by the Archbishop, was presented by him, bowing. The sincerity of His Majesty in the reading of his fine reply was deeply felt. The English-speaking races, he said, for three hundred years had ‘turned in their need to the grand simplicity of the Authorised Version, and drawn upon its inexhaustible springs of wisdom and courage and joy. It is my confident hope . . . that my subjects may never cease to cherish their noble inheritance in the English Bible, which, in a secular aspect, is the first of national treasures, and is, as you truly say, in its spiritual significance “the most valuable thing that this world affords.”’

All were presented to His Majesty, without respect of precedence, and with every one he cordially shook hands. The whole function was most impressive, and formed a signal proof, not only of the unity which binds together all sections of the Reformed Church within His Majesty's dominions, but also of the profound sympathy with which His Majesty himself shares the veneration of his subjects for Holy Writ, and its fine and time-hallowed English Version.

When last Assembly (1910) had enacted the new formula, they agreed, on my motion, to appoint a small committee 'to consider and report on the course that should now be followed' with regard to the questions put to ministers and probationers, and other relevant matter. They made me convener, and, if spared, I shall have to give in our report to next Assembly.

CHAPTER VII

ENLARGEMENT OF THE ASSEMBLY AND ASSEMBLY HALL

THE movement for a larger representation of presbyteries in the General Assembly began in 1891 with an overture from the presbytery of Dumbarton. Mr. Warr appeared in support of it. I was made convener of a committee appointed to consider the whole subject. More men more room was seen quicker than thought, and having examined the premises I said to the architects who were erecting my new church at Earlston (Hardy and Wight), 'It will be a feather in your cap if you can produce the right plan: it has been talked of for a generation.' They did. I showed the plan at the first meeting of committee as my private property got for my own satisfaction, but they adopted it.

We reported to next Assembly a reasoned opinion that the power of determining the number of members who shall constitute the Assembly resides in itself, and that increased membership

was desirable ; and for this we submitted a scheme. For the enlargement of the hall also we gave in our plan, recommending that this business should be so matured before next Assembly that immediately on its rising the hall might be put in the hands of the contractor.

In the Assembly those two subjects—increase of the membership and enlargement of the hall—were dealt with separately. Take the former of them first.

We were instructed to obtain the opinion of presbyteries. This was not what is known as passing through the Barrier Act. We reported to the Assembly of 1893 that sixty-two presbyteries desired an increase, of which thirty-three wished a greater proportion of elders. We submitted a scheme in which *inter alia* the number of ministers and elders, which had been in the proportion of about three to two, was brought so close as that of eleven to ten. I moved its adoption. The leading men, with the sole exception of Dr. Gillespie, opposed any increase. They sat together, evidently bent on ending the proposal. One of them rather simply delivered himself into my hands. He had argued that a small body is more likely to act wisely than a large ; but ere all was over he tried to block the business by the

argument that there was a small number present ! The scheme was carried by seventy-one votes to sixty, and became the rule. A presbytery sends one minister for every four or part of four of its number, and one elder for every six or part of six. There are also elders from burghs.

Two most unusual matters, and of piquant interest, incidentally came into the hands of my committee on the membership, and cost me much laborious historical and legal investigation.

More than twenty years before, the question had come into the Assembly whether the Professor of Divinity and Church History and the Professor of Divinity and Biblical Criticism in St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, were *ex officio* members of the presbytery of St. Andrews. The professors at the time were Mitchell and Crombie, and they most devoutly desired a negative reply. After more reports than one by a committee, a decision was given at nearly two o'clock on a fine May morning of 1872, after a five hours' debate. Professor Crombie, contrary to the opinion of the committee (convener, the procurator), was held to be a member of presbytery by fifty-seven votes to fifty-five. Professor Mitchell, in accordance with the opinion of the committee, was held to be also a member by a majority of

fifty-nine to fifty-four. The professors were not satisfied.

Now in 1892 it happened that they or their friends were seized with the idea of a re-trial by putting the question into the hands of my committee, and an overture by members was rapidly got up to that effect and adopted by a majority of the Assembly.

In 1894 we gave in a thorough and exhaustive report, which was followed by my motion declaring that these professors are not members of the presbytery. A counter-motion was made to reaffirm the old decision, but was lost within two hours by fifty-two votes to twenty-one.

The other subject to which I have referred was the 'Church of Campvere,' in Holland, which stood on the list year after year as one of the bodies entitled to send a commissioner to the General Assembly. By an arrangement, which seems to us with our modern views of commerce most strange and curious, the Scots for centuries enjoyed great privileges in the Netherlands, which always depended on a contract, ratified by both sovereigns, between our Royal Burghs or (before they had a Convention) the representatives of the trading estate of Scotland, and one city or another, which was called the

Scotch Staple Port. In 1444 Campvere became the port. The terms of such contracts are most interesting (see my *Digest*). Among other things the town provided a church, and a salary for the minister, precentor, and clerk. The minister was to be elected 'by the Burghs with the advyse and consent of His Majestie.' The General Assembly in 1641 resolved 'that it seemed expedient for correspondencie that might be had with forraigne parts for the weal of this Kirk that the Scots Kirk at Campheir were joined to the Kirk of Scotland as a member thereof,' and that the minister and kirk-session be written willing them to send their minister and one elder as commissioners to the General Assembly 'every third year at least.' In my committee's report of 1892 it was recommended that as there had been no commissioner for nearly a century—the last having been in 1797—'Church of Campvere' should be omitted from the Assembly's list of commissioning bodies. As has been said, we were instructed to get the opinion of presbyteries and reconsider the whole subject. Regarding this part of the subject, forty-seven presbyteries favoured the omission of Campvere, and ten gave no return. We now (1893) reported: 'From the foregoing statement it must be clear not only that the

Church of Campvere is extinct, but that its existence and its connection with this Church arose and were continued under conditions which are now impossible for any Church.' But when we reached the Assembly with this we found a petition from Mr. Frater claiming 'as minister of the combined Scotch churches of Middelburg and Flushing,' 'the right of representation in the General Assembly.' This petition was now remitted to us, with instructions to give Mr. Frater opportunity of being heard. When we again reached the Assembly in 1894, Mr. Frater was there presenting now a commission from 'the kirk-session of the remanent congregation of the Scotch Kirk at Campvere presently worshipping in Middelburg.' It need hardly be said that the commission was not sustained, and by a large majority; but one is set on speculating how in the face of the facts in the report there should have been any minority at all. The question of retaining the name on the Assembly's list had yet to be decided, but had now been reduced to a matter of sentiment. At a subsequent diet, 'omit' was carried by sixty-one votes to fifty-eight; but the vote was repeated by the doors, and then 'retain' was carried by seventy to sixty-eight.' Thus 'Church of Campvere'

still stands on the list—*in memoriam*. The place is a decaying village of eight hundred inhabitants, known in Holland only as Veer or Ter Veer (or Vere), that is, ferry. It had been the ferry to Kamper on a neighbouring island, and its name was Kamperveer till after that island was submerged.

In the searching investigation that was required for the full and exact presentation of this case, I was greatly indebted to my esteemed friend and parishioner, Lord Reay, from his local knowledge of the places, and his access to records in Holland.

Turning now to the enlargement of the hall. I have said that my committee—which reported on both subjects in the first report of all—recommended that this business should be so matured before next Assembly (1893), that immediately on its rising the hall might be put in the hands of the contractor. This was agreed to, and the committee now in charge were instructed accordingly. Proceeding on that instruction, we were ready for next Assembly, which on my motion unanimously agreed that we should go on with the execution of the work, and gave us authority, if we obtained sufficient funds, to purchase the adjoining tenement.

Next day, however, an obstacle was interposed. We had reported the estimated cost at £6000, and now this appeared so serious that the instruction to proceed was virtually suspended for a few days to give opportunity of finding a guarantee for half that sum. Some friends kindly offered to share it, but I had resolved, for the sake of simplicity and freedom, to take the whole responsibility. Professor Milligan, Principal Clerk, privately advised me not to attempt the enterprise at all : I should be digging my own grave. When the days of grace were expired, and I was stating the position, I ventured to say we had heard of a mouse letting a lion out of the toils. ' Who will be the mouse ? ' interjected Dr. Story ; ' I will be the mouse,' said I. The agent was authorised to sign contracts when £3000 had been subscribed. That the contracts might be signed and the work go on, the committee accepted my guarantee for the £3000. I had no fear of raising it.

But the irony of fact overtook the Assembly's precaution. The builder called on the architects saying his agents informed him that he could not contract with a non-corporate body like the General Assembly. What was to be done ? Happening to come in at the time, I said, ' Your

agents are quite right: now look here—I trust *you*; do you trust *me*?’ ‘I trust *you*,’ said he. ‘Then,’ said I, ‘go ahead.’ And so we went on and finished with never a contract.

The moment the Assembly had given authority to proceed I had begun to look for money. Accidentally I met Sir William Ogilvy-Dalgleish on the stair-landing. He said some of them had been conferring, and were going to give a hundred. ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘you might make it two, Sir William.’ ‘But Mr. Campbell,’ he said, ‘and I agreed on a hundred.’ This was James A. Campbell of Stracathro. Said I, ‘If Mr. Campbell will give two, you will?’ ‘Yes.’ So off I went into the Assembly and whispered this to Mr. Campbell, who said, ‘Very well.’ Mr. G. B. Wilson of the Church offices gave me more than double what I could have expected—£10, with the remark that he considered the undertaking to be a work of faith. Queen Victoria gave £100.

At an early meeting of our committee a member said, ‘We ’ll have to appoint a treasurer.’ ‘No, thank you,’ said I, ‘if I am to find the money, I ’ll tend the money, and spend the money.’ And so it was. I went over the country—very kindly housed and helped, mostly by ministers and their wives—and found the money; and every instal-

ment to the builder was sent by first post after receiving the architect's certificate. In the end I had been paid upwards of £20 of interest on deposits in the bank. It would be no more than the truth if I should say that I also supervised, as if I had been inspector of works. The whole was hard and trying work, but not uninteresting. I am told that the story, having often been repeated by the worthy donor, is still current in Dundee and, as it is not a bad specimen, I may give it: Writing a cheque for £20 he said, 'I don't know what is making me give you so much.' 'Oh,' said I, 'just that you're a good soul.' 'It's like pulling a tooth,' said he. 'Precisely,' said I, 'the comfort comes immediately.'

It was at this time that the late Mr. James Hope of Belmont when I called upon him showed me a pocket-book that had belonged to an ancestor of his, and had come through at least one eventful day. The owner of it was a farmer whose market town was Dumfries. Thither he and his spouse had gone one market day which was also rent day. Arrived in the town they parted—she to her marketing, he to pay his rent. When they met again at the set time he was in great trouble. His pocket must have been picked, for when he arrived at the factor's he could not find his pocket-

book, and the rent was not paid. He could hardly be persuaded to eat, but his wife coaxed him, and seemed but little put about. At last she handed him the pocket-book. She said that, not having her infant with her, she had begun to suffer from pent-up milk. She then saw the wife of a mugger (or tinker) sitting on the tram of his cart suckling a child. The woman was very willing that she should have the benefit of the child, but said her cloak (which was red) would have to be taken too or else he would refuse. And so in this garb she sat in the woman's place with the child at her breast. Presently a man came from behind, and, without breaking his pace as he passed, thrust something under the cloak, saying, 'Tak' care o' that, ye jaud.' It was the pocket-book! This tale I read from a paper written by the farmer, and carefully preserved in that relic where the rent had lain.

Next Assembly (1894) was constituted of the increased membership, and met in the enlarged hall. Our report was given in by me. The completed work was now under the eye of the Assembly. For various reasons we had found it necessary to acquire the adjoining tenement before it was possible (as instructed by last Assembly) to find the money for it. It had,

therefore, been purchased for ourselves by the Agent, Mr. Wenley, and myself, and our title to it completed; and it was afterwards bought from us by the committee. The title deeds, too bulky to be laid on the Assembly's table, lay a great pile underneath it.

When that Assembly was approaching I had charged the architects to let me know as nearly as they could the sum total, to the uttermost farthing, that I should yet have to pay; and I found there was enough in hand. But let my feelings be imagined when on arriving to attend the Assembly they told me that they had not included the balance of their own fee, £260. This I determined to find, and did find, before giving in my report. I found many generous friends; and many who had given liberally added to their bounty. I was able to report the amount received as £9527, 6s. 4d.; and the amount paid, and presumably to be paid, £9520, 2s. 9d. I may note that the number of contributions received was 938—ranging, with the exception of £2000 from the Baird Trust, from £220 downwards. The names of all contributors were reported.

By order of the Assembly an extract of their minute was sent to me. The Assembly expressed 'their lively satisfaction with the improvement

of the Assembly Hall and its rooms, and with the promptitude and completeness with which the work had been carried out.' Part of the deliverance was as follows :—

The General Assembly heartily concur with the unanimous testimony of the committee that for the satisfactory result which has attended their labours they are entirely indebted to the zeal, energy and unwearied activity of their convener, and being fully sensible of the remarkable ability with which he has conducted the undertaking, and of the time and strength which he has willingly expended in attending to the details of it, and especially in the labour of collecting and disbursing the funds required for its cost, they resolve to express through the moderator, their sense of the deep obligation under which the Church rests to Dr. Mair, and they instruct the committee, before completing the work, to provide for the erection of some permanent memorial of his eminent and successful services in connection with it.

The moderator, Dr. Story, expressed the thanks of the Assembly very fully and with great kindness, and took the opportunity of frankly saying that his foresight had not been so true as mine.

The memorial which the committee were instructed to provide took the form of a brass tablet, placed on the wall between the door into the hall where the Assembly sits and the door into the acquired property, bearing this inscription :—

Between the General Assemblies of 1893 and 1894 this hall was enlarged, its interior transformed, its acoustics remedied, effective ventilation and heating provided, the addition which is crowned by the library erected, the adjoining tenement purchased, and the total cost met by the sum of £9862. By order of the General Assembly this tablet commemorates the indebtedness of the Church for that work to the ability and energy of the Rev. William Mair, M.A., D.D., minister of Earlston, author of *Digest of Church Laws*, etc.

Another year was required for alterations on the acquired property. Then my friend the procurator, Mr. Cheyne, said to me he had been asked to request that I would sit to Sir George Reid for my portrait. I confess to having felt very shy over this, as well as very doubtful of the effect in paint, but he persuaded me. It may be part of Sir George's art that he made the time of the sittings pass agreeably with conversation and story-telling. One little joke of our own we had. Dr. Story in discharge of a duty entrusted to him had submitted to the artist an inscription for the painting. The only suggestion in reply was that instead of 'Earlston,' he would prefer the more beautiful and ancient 'Ercildoune.' To this the Rev. Doctor readily assented, adding that it would also be more in keeping with 'the mediæval character of the subject.' One morning my hands

were placed in position for the painter, and on descending from my perch I expressed surprise to see them so complete on the canvas. 'Ah,' said he, 'that won't do: they are not mediæval enough!' And so in due course they were whittled into form. I had not known that an artist has behind him a mirror in which he can at will see his work as reflected, reversed. That is, if, for example, you look at a painting and see a ringed finger on the hand opposite to your right, and then look at it in the glass, you see the ringed hand opposite to your left. If on the canvas you see a person's cheek opposite your right hand, you will see it in the mirror opposite your left. Thus by means of a different relation to himself the artist makes more sure of the truthfulness of his work. The practice has a hint for us on making sure of the correctness of the impressions we take of people. Sir George was President of R.S.A.

The portrait was presented during the Assembly of 1896, when a sitting was suspended half an hour for the purpose. The presentation was made in one of the new rooms by the hand of the Rev. Dr. Scott, leader in the Assembly. He expressed the hope that I might long be spared to 'look myself in the face.' The hope has been fulfilled, while, alas, the younger man who so kindly ex-

pressed it has been called away. The likeness is said to be excellent, and the painting is certainly a beautifully finished piece of work. It is destined for the Church after my wife and me. The inscription is :—

Presented to the Revd. William Mair, M.A., D.D., minister of Earlston, by many friends as a mark of esteem and cordial acknowledgment of his zeal and ability in the work of enlarging and improving the Assembly Hall of the Church of Scotland as set forth in the records of the Church. May 1896.

It had been overlooked that the air for ventilation driven forcefully from the grating fronts of the gangway steps would enfilade the cross benches on both sides. I was especially sorry to learn that this had fixed a bad cold on my first and largest contributor. After the Assembly I returned to Edinburgh, and met two men from the firm of engineers, sent at my request with specified appliances. The result was the plate of iron which is now to be seen at the front of the gratings. The angle of it and its height we determined by the use of smoke to show the direction which they gave to the current.

It is interesting to learn that under the foundation stone of the Assembly Hall there is a plate with the following inscription :—

212 THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS HALL

To the glory of God, in honour of the
QUEEN.

On the 3rd day of September in the year of our Lord

MDCCCXLII.,

The day of our Most Gracious Majesty
QUEEN VICTORIA

Visiting the City of Edinburgh,

The Right Hon. Sir James Forrest of Comiston, Bart.,

LORD PROVOST,

The Rev. David Welsh, D.D., Moderator of the Assembly,

The Foundation Stone of this superb structure to be called

VICTORIA HALL

For the use of the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND,

was laid by

The Right Hon. Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, G.C.H., etc.,

Grand Master Mason of Scotland,

In presence of the Grand Lodge and other Masonic Lodges.

JAMES GILLESPIE GRAHAM, Esq. of Orchill, Architect.

JOHN LIND, Master Builder of the Hall.

The length of Building from East to West, 141 feet.

Height of Spire over the Entrance, 241 feet.

The name Victoria Hall would seem never to have come into use. The General Assembly itself at its first meeting there in 1844 records that it convened in the New Assembly Hall. The fact is that it was by agreement expressly built both for the Tolbooth parish church as part of the hall, and for the Assembly Hall, and has been equally

known by either designation. But the ceremony here described had respect to it only in the latter character, and it may be doubted if the edifice would have been so 'superb' had it been for the church only.

The Tolbooth parish dated from 1641. It was a collegiate charge till the stipend of the second charge was transferred to the new parish of St. Stephen's in 1828. Its church was part of the pile of St. Giles'. Edinburgh in 1827 got an Act of Parliament for certain improvements. Through the commissioners appointed under it an agreement was come to between the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury and the Magistrates and Town Council—in other words, the Crown and the city. On the one hand, the city paid £6000 towards the erection of an edifice which should serve both for an Assembly Hall and a church for Tolbooth parish near the Castlehill; and on the other, the Crown defrayed the remainder and made over to the city the aisle of St. Giles'. The duties and responsibilities of both parties were defined in respect of the church and the hall. But much happened after all this.

The Annuity Abolition Act of 1860 empowered the commissioners appointed under it to continue this charge, or allow it to become extinct at the

close of the existing incumbency. When this took place in 1866 they sanctioned a licentiate. Then came the Annuity Amending Act of 1870, which abolished the parish. The church (in the Assembly Hall) was now neither chapel nor parish church within the bounds of any parish. Professor Charteris, who had already rendered invaluable assistance, had the presbytery's leave to administer the sacraments, and he also frequently preached. Along with the elders he took charge of the parish, organised and superintended men and women workers covering the whole field, practically made it a training ground for his students, and finally had it endowed as a *quoad sacra* parish in 1873. Everything relating to the premises in their use as the Assembly Hall is the business of the Crown. It was with the Crown (not to mention the Dean of Guild Court) that my committee had to do.

CHAPTER VIII

MODERATORSHIP

THE opening of the General Assembly is preceded by public worship conducted by the retiring moderator in the High Kirk (St. Giles'). The twentieth General Assembly (1570) resolved that 'he who is moderator in the last Assembly shall make the prayer and exhortation in the Assembly thereafter following.' So it is also at synod meetings. And so it was at one time in presbyteries, where the sermon, however, was by a member appointed for the purpose, on a prescribed text, and was followed by criticism ('censure').

From St. Giles' the retiring moderator goes in his carriage to the Assembly Hall and takes the chair. He gives time for the arrival of the worshippers from St. Giles', including the Sovereign's Commissioner, who drives attended by his escort. He then constitutes the meeting by prayer, makes a few brief retrospective remarks (which are no part of the prescribed order), and concludes by nominating a member as his

successor, if it shall be the pleasure of the Assembly. It always is their pleasure, though on a few rare occasions another has been proposed by some dissatisfied spirits and a vote taken. For six months it has been known who is to be nominated, and it is understood, though there is no evidence of it or rule for it, that he has been selected by the ex-moderators.

How, or when, this system originated has yet to be discovered. Two hundred years ago the practice was for the retiring moderator to propose a list of one or two, to which others might be added. But it is not from the records that even this information is to be had. They simply tell that *so and so* was chosen moderator. Doubtless the influence of former moderators always had a part in the putting forward of names, till, like star-dust, there is no saying how, it took definite shape with concentrated effect in a single nomination. In 1901 a couple of overtures brought up the subject and led to its being remitted to the General Committee for consideration. Their report next year was that 'the present system is the best practicable in the circumstances.' And the Assembly by a large majority took this view.

The retiring moderator who nominated me was Dr. Archibald Scott, Edinburgh. The moderator's

carriage, already hired by the coming man, serves for both on this forenoon. While Dr. Scott was occupied in St. Giles', it took me from my hotel (the Waterloo) to the Assembly Hall. Till then I had been getting ready. To know one's self in unaccustomed attire and status takes a little time. The dress of the moderator is court dress minus the sword: single-breasted, round-fronted coat; lace ruffles at the breast and wrists; knee breeches with silver buckles at the knce; black silk hose; patent leather shoes with large silver buckles; and a three-cornered cocked beaver hat. But even court dress—a matter in charge of the Lord Chamberlain—does, though only by command of the Sovereign, occasionally change its fashion somewhat. The lace had been in court dress, but not in the moderator's till it was donned by Principal Pirie in 1864. It is now optional at court.

Driven to the Assembly Hall, accompanied by my wife and chaplain, with the 'moderator's man' on the box, I made my way to the moderator's room. To this the latter part of the ascent is a cramped bare stone stair. Secreted here with my chaplain (Fergusson, p. 152) awaiting events, I might practise calmness, and I had still to get myself arrayed in gown and bands and hood. This hood: all my days it has been so very much

against the grain with me to exhibit insignia of honours in worship, or make any worldly show, that, though I had been D.D. for ten years, I had never got the hood—there being no occasion for me to use it except in the pulpit. When I got into the hands of Sir George Reid, however, he said there must be some colour to relieve the monotonous mass of black, and I must get my hood. But he said the present Aberdeen hood was ugly, though the former one had been beautiful—a pretty purple with white silk lining. ‘Oh,’ said I, ‘thus it was when I received the degree.’ And so it was got.

The moderator’s room was far beyond the reach of hearing anything that went on. But at length a foot was heard on the stair, and the Principal Clerk (Story) looked in saying quietly, ‘Come now.’ We followed, and at the door of the hall he spoke once more, ‘Mind the step,’—most thoughtful, for that step is invisible till too late, most reassuring also to find we were still in the world of common things. It is impressive to be met by the great assemblage rising to its feet. With a cordial hand-clasp from the descending moderator, I step up into his place, and bow—front, right, left, and (turning round) to the Commissioner. Then, the Assembly upstanding,

the Queen's Commission to the Marquess of Tweeddale was handed down from his bench by the Purse-bearer to the Principal Clerk, and the question put from the chair: 'Is it the pleasure of the Assembly that Her Majesty's Commission to the Marquess of Tweeddale [or, to her Commissioner] be now read?' After it is read, their pleasure is asked as to its being recorded. The same course is followed with a letter from the Queen to the Assembly—the terms of the first question being whether 'Her Majesty's most gracious letter be now read with all honour and respect.'

The Sovereign's letter to the General Assembly is different every year, though always of the same tenor, except in so far as some unusual event, happy or grievous, may be specially referred to. Believing that most people would be glad to have a copy of one of these letters from Queen Victoria, I shall give that which was addressed to my Assembly the year of her diamond jubilee:—

VICTORIA R.

RIGHT REVEREND AND WELL-BELOVED. We greet you well!

Once again We give Our cordial approbation of the Meeting of your Venerable Assembly, and joyfully avail Ourselves of the opportunity which it affords Us of once more assuring you of the affectionate regard in which We hold the Church of Scotland, and of Our resolution to maintain it in all its Rights and Privileges.

For the past Sixty Years, during which, in God's providence, We have occupied the Throne of the United Kingdom, you have given Us such constant proofs of your loyalty and devotion, and of your earnestness in the promotion of true religion and virtue, that We are inspired with confidence that, under the blessing of Almighty God, your deliberations will tend to further the happiness and spiritual welfare of Our faithful and loyal subjects of Scotland.

We have again commissioned Our Right Trusty and Entirely-Beloved Cousin,¹ William Montagu, Marquess of Tweeddale, to represent Us in your General Assembly; and we are persuaded that his many excellent qualities, and the devotion and judgment which he displayed on former occasions in the execution of the important duties of this high office, will secure for him your hearty co-operation and assistance.

And so, commending you to the loving charge and guidance of Almighty God, We bid you, in sincere affection, farewell!

Given at Our Court at Saint James's, the Seventh day
of May 1897, in the Sixtieth year of Our Reign.

By Her Majesty's Command,

BALFOUR OF BURLEIGH.

To the Right Reverend and Well-Beloved
The Moderator, Ministers, and Elders
of the General Assembly
of the Church of Scotland.

¹ In writs and commissions the Sovereign when mentioning an earl or higher peer, styles him Trusty and Well-Beloved Cousin. It was begun by Henry IV. who, being actually related or allied more or less to every earl in the kingdom, thus ingeniously acknowledged all.

When the letter has been ordered to be recorded, the moderator turns round and faces the Throne awaiting His Grace's address to the Assembly. To this address the moderator replies. It has become the practice to read the reply. This had rarely been done, and it was not done by me. I give it here as reported in the *Scotsman* : ' May it please your Grace, the General Assembly has received with the utmost satisfaction Her Majesty's most gracious letter, and the gracious message which you have been commanded to deliver. We regard the presence of her representative here as homage to the great Head of the Church, by whom and for whom all things, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers, were created. We regard it as an acknowledgment that the State in this sense, and for the good of the nation, owes encouragement and assistance to His Church. And besides all this, Her Majesty the Queen has greatly endeared herself to the Church of Scotland, as indeed to her subjects in all the world, and on that account every message and every messenger from her is doubly welcome. We thank and praise God that He has given to the country and to the world a Sovereign so wise and good and lovable, and has made her reign so

powerful, beneficent and prosperous, and has prolonged it so as to establish for us and for generations to come its vast immeasurable heritage of good. The General Assembly will take occasion to give some appropriate expression of our feelings under circumstances such as have never before gladdened any nation. We rejoice in the renewed assurance given by the Queen of her good will to the Church of Scotland, and her resolution to maintain in Scotland the Presbyterian form of Church government. Her Majesty may be assured that our loyalty to her person and crown is complete and unwavering, and that no pains shall be spared to justify the confidence she is pleased to place in us in the discharge of the high and solemn duties which devolve upon us. . . .

‘Your Grace will expect—and it is our firm purpose—that in dealing with the affairs that come before us our speech shall be that of men earnest in maintaining that which they believe to be true, yet mindful of the dignity of this Court and of the Christian duties of charity and kindness. We gratefully acknowledge the bounty of the Queen in continuing her gift of £2000, and we receive it, assuring your Grace that we shall have pleasure in applying it in accordance with

the wish of Her Majesty as conveyed by your Grace. May it please your Grace, honoured by Her Majesty to hold your high office for the fifth time, you come to us as a friend tried and proven, and in the name of the General Assembly I offer you the heartiest welcome. You are personally acquainted with the field of our labours, you understand our procedure and sympathise in our aims—yourself one of the rulers of the Church. We do not forget the urbanity and kindness with which you discharge the duties of your office, and we gratefully remember the grace and kindness shown to us by yourself and your noble lady at the Palace of Holyrood. Our confidence your Grace always possessed; now you and Lady Tweeddale have won your way to our hearts. I thank you for the kind expression of your desire to contribute to the comfort and convenience of the members of Assembly.'

Those lofty and impressive proceedings being ended, the moderator turns again to the Assembly, all resume their seats, and ordinary business goes on till, as the minute says, 'The Assembly adjourned at 2.35 to meet at 12 noon to-morrow'—an hour later than usual because of the communion in St. Giles', begun in 1889.

This was the fifth eventful Thursday in my life.

Before that morrow, we may make fuller acquaintance with the office of the Lord High Commissioner and his ways. It need hardly be said that there was no such office at first ; nor need we bewilder ourselves among the uncertain circumstances at any period during the one hundred and thirty years between the Reformation and the Revolution Settlement of 1690. It may be mentioned, however, that the Assembly, at times at least, pressed for one or more commissioners. In 1577 they so pressed the Regent, and, having been put off by him, they next year sent to the Privy Council for commissioners ‘to assist the Assembly by their presence and counsel.’ James VI. sometimes came himself, sometimes sent commissioners, sometimes did neither. Commoners as often as not held the office till 1643, when Sir Thomas Hope was the last of them. At the Revolution William and Mary in 1690 sent as their commissioner John Lord Carmichael, and a commissioner has been present at every Assembly since.

Taking the commission as it was in my year, the Queen says that, being occupied elsewhere with affairs of great moment she authorises and appoints ‘Our Trusty and Well-Beloved Cousin William Montagu, Marquess of Tweeddale,’ to be

her representative in all respects, and to be regarded as such. This was the last commission written in Latin. In 1898 the Assembly unexpectedly heard it read in English. It has the seal of Scotland attached.

There is no uniform for the office of Commissioner. He appears in any that he has the right to wear. I have seen, for example, the uniform of lord lieutenant, lord-in-waiting, diplomatist, archer (repeatedly), Yeomanry officer, Royal Horse Guards.

As has been seen, the Assembly met and was constituted a court of the Church independently of the Commissioner. Indeed it was only to the constituted court that his commission could be presented. He is not a member of the Assembly. Though an elder who is a member may be commissioner (as Lord Stair in 1910), a commissioner, as such, is not a member. And he does not sit in the place for members, but in what is called the Throne bench. This is behind the moderator's chair, about six feet high in front. It occupies a recess some twenty feet wide, with depth enough for four rows of chairs. At the front of this under a canopy sits the Commissioner. Behind his chair on the framed support of the canopy are the Royal Arms. With him are his purse-bearer

in some kind of uniform or in court dress, and his chaplain¹ in court dress, except the sword. There may also be some distinguished visitor. His Lady also and friends have a place. So also, on the other side of him the lady of the moderator, and of the last moderator, each with a friend or two have their places, in the foremost and next chairs respectively.

The forenoon session of the Assembly opens with singing from the Psalms or Paraphrases, reading and prayer—the evening only with prayer. The organ of the church is silent. In 1902 a dozen members overtured the Assembly in favour of its use. Dr. Sprott, North Berwick, moved the dismissal of the overture, and Principal Story seconded. He said the opening praise had always struck him as very impressive and very touching, more so than it could be rendered by any instrumental accompaniment. He said it was the duty of members to be present, yet there were some who disapproved of an instrument, and would find their spirit of devotion interfered with. He spoke of

¹ His chaplain is some parish minister of his acquaintance. He has no touch with the six Scots chaplains to the sovereign. They are regarded as members of the Royal Household—called in the reign of James VI. members of the King's House. Their only duty is to celebrate divine service when required. There is no salary.

changes that had been made by the Assembly, and said, 'Leave us something unchanged. . . . As I listen to the morning psalm, I am old enough to remember the scene around this table [giving distinguished names]; leave us something which, whatever be its advantages or disadvantages, is beloved for the fathers' sake. . . . To those who, like myself, look back upon a long period, there seems to be nothing better in this respect than what we have. Leave us untouched, undimmed, the dear memories of those days, now to some of us far and distant, and perhaps only dearer because of the distance.' This was followed by loud applause, an overwhelming majority, and more applause. It is noteworthy that our present precentor, Mr. Robert Hamilton, has led the singing of the General Assembly for just forty years, and has never missed an Assembly all that time.

The Commissioner is unfailingly punctual. He is received standing, but takes his place as reverentially as any man. His first act is to bow to the moderator and the Assembly. During business that interests him, or that is of public importance, he will be seen attentive in his place; but, the door of the Throne bench being behind, his quiet going and coming excite no attention.

Every member of the Assembly receives from him an invitation to dinner for some evening during the Assembly. The moderator dines with him every night ; and his wife is usually asked four or five times. If there should be an evening session of the Assembly the chair is taken by the last moderator. The first day of the Assembly, where my tale still lingers, brought my first palace dinner as moderator. In spite of my picking and choosing, it left no doubt that the nightly table would be the undoing of me. But the Commissioner's Lady, whom the moderator has the honour of conducting to table, came to the rescue in the most charming manner, and took care that I should ever after have a single simple dish all my own. I think it may safely be said that this was unprecedented. In the morning I breakfasted in my own rooms in my own way, and so was fortified to receive the hundreds of guests to ' the moderator's breakfast.'

At table the Commissioner sits, not at the end, but at the middle of the side, and his Lady sits opposite to him. The moderator says grace, and when dinner is ended returns thanks. His Grace then gives without another word ' The King,' and after a little, ' The Church of Scotland.' At the first of these, while the company still

stand, are heard the strains of the National Anthem from the military band in the quadrangle; and at the second (all again standing) the tune Old Hundredth. In due time pipers, splendid fellows, pass twice or thrice round the room, at their best—breathing defiance. After this the Commissioner's Lady rises, and with her all the ladies present retire. As they disappear, before the gentlemen sit down, the moderator gives, say, 'Her Grace, the Marchioness of Tweeddale.' The company do not sit long after. When the Commissioner rises the moderator, who is on the side next the door, waits till he comes round, and they walk together to the drawing-room.

We might all go now to the Assembly Hall for business on the morrow at the appointed hour of noon. But we are seeking only that which from any cause is out of the usual. I have mentioned a new thing at the table of the palace; another occurred at the table of the Assembly. For years there had been simmering dissatisfaction, occasionally expressed inarticulately, because certain officials seemed to be indifferent whether their speaking was heard by the Assembly or not. At last it boiled up for a moment. We had reached the point of putting an important motion

to the vote, and it had just been read over as usual, when a tall member in a distant bench rose up and shouted: 'Would you be so good, sir, as read it over in your own clear distinct voice—we haven't heard a word of it.' The request was granted. The incident was the more amusing to one or two of us who knew that some of the authorities had doubted if there would be voice enough for the chair.

This was the year of the Queen's diamond jubilee. She had completed the sixtieth year of her reign, and a service of thanksgiving was held by the Assembly on Tuesday, the 25th May. Next day at the request of the Assembly I agreed to publish the prayer, and did so as part of a memorandum of the whole service. It was prettily done up for me in four-page form, the first page being in gold ink and the rest in purple. Psalm c. was sung; Psalm xxx. 1-12 read; Psalm xxi. 1-5 and 13 sung; Romans xiii.; 1 Timothy ii. 1-6 read; prayer offered, followed by the National Anthem. The prayer was:—

Most gracious God, we come before Thee with the voice of thanksgiving and praise. Accept us, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. We worship Thee as the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord

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of Lords, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things, and from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift.

We would render unto Thee our humble and devout thanksgiving that it did please Thee to give to our nation and kingdom and empire—yea, and to the world—Thy servant, Victoria, our most gracious Queen, and so abundantly to bless her and make her a blessing. When as yet but a child, and Thou didst put the sceptre in her hand, Thou hadst already stayed her heart on Thee in humble faith, and endued her with the wisdom that is from above. And Thou hast never taken Thy loving-kindness from her, nor suffered Thy faithfulness to fail. In her home and on her throne Thy gentleness hath made her great. Thou hast filled her with the spirit of love, and Thou hast bound all hearts to her in love. All eyes have seen in her how good it is in sorrow to lean on Thee, and encourage one's self in Thee, and how good it is in joy to rejoice in Thee, and to keep Thy law continually.

Thou hast given her a heart to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep herself unspotted from the world. By Thee she has lived and by Thee ruled with singleness of heart in truth and faithfulness; and a sceptre of righteousness and mercy hast Thou made the sceptre of her kingdom. From her life and from her throne, set on high by Thee, men have seen the light of Thy grace to the glory of Thy name. Thou hast endowed her; Thou hast led her; so is her throne established by righteousness, and we dwell in safety and are quiet from fear of evil. We thank Thee for her life-long heart's desire to promote peace and goodwill among the nations, and for the influence Thou hast given her in their councils. And Thou hast given her length of days, and from youth to age hast continued and evermore increased these Thy

blessings. We will extol Thee, our God, O King, and will bless Thy name for ever and ever.

And under her reign for so long a time Thou hast more and more prospered her people in all things temporal and spiritual. Thou hast multiplied the nation and increased the joy. Yea, Thou hast gathered to her many lands and great nations to be sharers of our blessings. Her reign has bidden to undo heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free. Sped by Thee, many have run to and fro, and knowledge is increased, revealing the hidden wonders and blessings of Thy great and marvellous works, and carrying to the ends of the earth Thy word of life, Thy good tidings of great joy.

Alas, O Lord, that in our thanksgiving we must mourn our unworthiness of all this Thy goodness, our forgetfulness that to whom much is given, of them shall much be required, our proneness to abuse Thy gifts—consuming them on our lusts rather than in Thy service. Surely in faithfulness Thou didst afflict us, when by war, and massacre, and famine, and pestilence, Thou hast humbled us before Thee. For this we humbly thank Thee, and acknowledge Thy mercy and goodness in that Thou didst not forsake us. Oh give us grace to judge ourselves that we may not be judged of Thee. Forgive all sin, we humbly pray Thee. Pour out Thy Holy Spirit upon us, and grant that now our thankfulness, purged from selfishness, may prove itself sincere by a dutiful surrender of Thine own to Thee.

Yet again we thank Thee, O God, that Thou hast given to Thy handmaiden and to us the hope that for a great while to come there shall not want one of her race to sit upon her throne. And we beseech Thee hear her prayers, hear our prayers, that all who come after her may walk before Thee as she has walked—kept and honoured by

Thee, and beloved of all the people. Yet, Lord, we entreat Thee to prolong the days of Thy handmaiden, and continue to her Thy great goodness. Bear her up in fitness for all her duties so great and high. Let her walk in the light of Thy countenance, and in Thy name rejoice all the day, till Thou shalt put upon her head a crown purer than gold, even the crown of life. And to Thee be all the honour and glory for ever. Amen.

We may pass on to the closing scene of the Assembly, which is always in the evening. There is no official dinner at Holyrood that night. His Grace is timed to arrive shortly before ten o'clock. By this time business is finished. It generally consists of little else than passing tributes to the memory of departed moderators and distinguished churchmen. His Grace is received as usual, and the moderator having bowed to him turns to deliver his 'closing address' to the Assembly.

The building was packed, as it was wont to be—a splendid and inspiring sight. Recently it has not been so well filled. Whether this is owing to the day of the last meeting having been changed, as it was in 1901, from Monday to Friday, or to indifference, need not be discussed. I had seen my predecessors bent over the desk, and directing half their effort to it. I therefore had it put away, and its place on the table taken by a

reading-desk mounted on four legs, behind which I could stand erect and speak freely.

The address when afterwards published was entitled *Loyalty: The Christ our King*. Its introductory sentences have already been given (p. 50). I shall try to summarise what followed.

Amid the unusual ecclesiastical activity which we have witnessed in recent years, it seems to me that the Churches have been suffering from numerous and subtle temptations to take a point of view down on some plane below that which is proper for a Christian Church. At times with obvious reason, at other times not, the Headship of our Lord over His Church has in this land been little else than a war cry. Yet there can be nothing better for the Church than that it should live in remembrance of that great truth and quietly judge of its everyday work in the light of it. In certain high functions in the Church we use the formula, 'In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great King and Head of the Church.' On such occasions we thus openly announce the point from which we view the duty we are discharging—even the throne of the Great King at the right hand of the Majesty on high. We have there the unchanging standpoint from which to endeavour to see the duty of the Christian and of the Christian Church.

It is accessible to us, for it is there we are to set our affection ; our very life is there, hid with Christ in God. Our aim, therefore, must be nothing less than to keep before us, as seen from that point, the great purpose of God for our world—the reconciling of it in Christ Jesus unto Himself—and to act in harmony with that purpose, in true, spiritual, heaven-born loyalty to our King.

The address proceeded to show what would be the practical effect of that view and aim, dominated by that motive of loyalty, on various matters spiritual and ecclesiastical—doctrine and doubt ; devotion ; holy orders ; authority and power ; the pulpit ; the parish ; Church courts ; life of the Church ; the relations of the Churches.

He has the right to hear from us what we are thinking, especially about Himself. Are we prepared to tell Him that He provided for us no reliable account of what He is, or what He said, or did ? If I should say, ‘ I will look up to my Lord and King, and will say to His face, No miracle was done by Thee, no miracle can be done,’ mine own mouth would condemn me, demanding of me, Who hath proved this to thee ? Rather in any time of doubt, or of temptation to doubt, true loyalty would speak

in the spirit of Job, 'Though I were righteous yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my judge.' Even if doubts were free from sin and purely intellectual—which in our present human nature is not possible—even then the best treatment of them is on our knees, communing with our King. That was wise counsel of the prophet to such as feared the Lord but had no light, 'Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.' And our Lord's test of doctrine is of perpetual obligation among the loyal, 'If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' Next, how do our devotions appear under the eye of our Lord? If devotion were the work of man, offered to God as if He needed anything, it might be our duty to clothe it with pomp and circumstance, to magnify even the arrangement of furniture, to call in the art of the decorator and the aid of lighted candles, and to make broad the phylactery of him that presides, and adjust his position by the compass. But, if worship or devotion is of the Holy Spirit, and is communion with God, such accompaniments can neither carry the soul within the veil nor commend it to God.

Holy orders is a subject the discussion of which

by one man with another is of no use at all to those whose opinions are formed. All should discuss it with our King and Lord Himself : ‘ Lord, can it be that aught is required except the call of the Holy Spirit given by Thee, the guidance of Thy providence, and acceptance by the rulers of a Church with their authority to minister therein ? Is it important with Thee, Lord, whether Thy minister is set apart by one presbyter promoted above others, or by a court of presbyters ? Is it true that the constitution of Thy Church, its enjoyment of Thy favour, its right to Thy promises, and the investing of its ministers with Thine authority have all been made by Thee to depend on its ministers having unbroken continuity of human touch with Thine apostles of old ? ’ It is difficult to conceive how any man having common sense, and being a Christian, can believe that our King is pleased with the vain jangling to which some have turned aside about ‘ orders,’ or with the presumption of such as plume themselves that they are not as other men are. Authority to minister given by a Church does not ensure power. Without power it is but the official uniform on a man of straw. Power must be received from on high. And surely never by the teaching of God did it enter the mind of any man that this

power from our living Head must travel to us along the line of departed dead. Again, in the work of the ministry there can be nothing so directive and sustaining as a constant overruling sense of being the commissioner of the Great King to do His work in His way. In particular, loyalty will move an aspirant to the ministry to spare no pains in fitting himself to deliver the message of the King so as best to carry it home, and when his time has come to preach he will first submit the sermons to Him. If there only prevails a lively sense of the position we occupy, then might one say, 'I sought throughout the manses of the land for the self-indulgent, the self-seeking, the worldly, the slovenly, the self-willed, the resentful, the rude, but they could not be found—not even the idle, for all were taken up somehow with the interests of their Lord's kingdom.'

Next I came to Church courts. We have professed our faith that Christ as King and Head of the Church hath therein appointed a government. In the courts we are His commissioners to attend on this very thing. In His name we constitute our meetings into courts, and we entreat His presence and guidance. Outsiders wonder to see many absent. They listen to the excuses, and are not satisfied. And when

they see men present at business but absent at prayer, they ask, Can these men believe in prayer? Business proceeds, discussion arises, expectation is on tiptoe filled with hope that strong men will enter the lists girt about with truth, striving together in brotherly kindness to test by argument whether this or that is the path of wisdom. It is no surprise if in the warmth that comes of energy words should escape that cause a passing pain. But what does cause surprise is that any man holding so high a commission should without necessity deliberately wound his neighbour. For all men feel that such as we should shoot only with the arrows of the King, which even against His foes are tipped with nothing more painful than truth, and are always winged with love. Our critics also say that, appointed to govern, we do not govern; and some lay the blame on Presbyterianism. 'But this I fearlessly hold and will maintain, that, if there be failure, the cause of it is not in the system of government, but in the men that constitute the courts; and I maintain it on the broad general ground that I have never known, and never heard of, an instance in which a system having any pretence to reasonableness failed in the hands of righteous men of suitable ability, while on the other hand

all history testifies to the fact that even a very indifferent system will succeed in the hands of such men. Let us present ourselves before our King and Head to govern for Him, not doing our own will but His. One thing has to be guarded against: our system of government tends to engender a spirit of self-assertion which seems incapable of settling down when the time for discussion is past, and the time for obedience has come.'

After Church courts I proceeded to speak of the life of the Church. In proportion as its office-bearers and especially its ministers are spiritually-minded and faithful so will the Church be. We may set ourselves to reform methods, but the pillars of the Church are men. Moulding and trimming of men by men may accomplish much. But the best ecclesiastical equipment bestowed by man will open no door into the souls of men. The key of that door is the truth taught by Christ and His apostles; the power to open is the power of the Holy Ghost. Bring men to look in the face of Christ as the eternal, divine Son of God, their Saviour, Prophet, Priest and King. And surely also the thought, that when ascending to His throne in heaven He so honoured and trusted His Church as to leave the prosecution of His cause

in its hands, would make the Church, as honourable men, spring to its feet ‘terrible as an army with banners’ to ‘sing forth the honour of His name and make His praise glorious,’ determined not to slack its hand till all things are subdued under Him, and that day has come which shall crown him Lord of all. But this must begin with the ministry ; and it is vain to cudgel men, or reason with them about their duties if we reach not their souls with the great truths taught in Scripture as underlying the redemption by Christ and as proceeding from it.

Finally, the address turned to look on the relations between the Churches, placing this subject also in the light of Christ’s Royal Headship. May the present comparative quietness not be an opportunity offered by God for dispassionate, solemn consideration of it ? I dare not dishonour my Lord by imagining that He sets one Church to trouble another Church which holds His truth and seeks to do His will. He brought a sword, but not for that. And if they who call to arms cannot show that it is by His order, then what becomes of their doctrine of the Royal Headship ? The six concluding pages is a reasoned, earnest plea for peace—that bond without which there cannot be unity ; and the

whole ends thus : ‘ It needs no theologian to tell that the bond of peace cannot be forged amid strife and bitterness and clamour. Nor can any fruit of the Spirit grow there ; nor will the Prince of Peace or the God of Peace dwell there. Is all this for which I have been pleading impossible ? And wherefore ? Is the Lord’s hand shortened ? And would that hand be helped by strife of man ? It is not impossible. It is duty to the King and Head of the Church, and would certainly bring His blessing. If it is not counted possible, if it is not counted practicable, if men are not to set themselves in earnest to bring it to pass, why then—why—do all these Churches sing, “ Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity ? ” Now the God of Peace Himself give us peace always by all means.’

Having concluded his address, the moderator, still addressing the Assembly, said :—

‘ Right Reverend and Right Honourable, as we met in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, so do I now in His great name dissolve this Assembly, and appoint the next General Assembly to be held here on Thursday, the nineteenth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight.’

Then turning to the Commissioner I said :—

‘ May it please your Grace, the business of this

General Assembly is now concluded. We are deeply sensible of the great interest which our revered and beloved Queen takes in all that concerns the Church of Scotland, both for its own sake and because the high things of which it has charge are of supreme importance to the well-being of the nation. You will permit me, therefore, to express the hope that in your report to Her Majesty you will be able to assure her that the General Assembly applied itself faithfully to the discharge of its duty, and showed a sincere desire to devise and carry out such measures as may increase the efficiency of the Church in all departments of its work for the furtherance of the kingdom of our Lord at home and abroad. We pray your Grace to lay before the Queen the expression of our humble duty, our devoted and affectionate regard, our gratitude for many tokens of her queenly and loving interest in our Church and nation, and the assurance of our continual prayer that the favour of Almighty God may compass her about, and extend to all places of her dominions. I desire to express to your Grace the warm thanks of the General Assembly for the great courtesy and hospitality shown to us at Holyrood within the charmed circle of the bright intelligence and gracious kindness of Lady

Tweeddale. You have laid us, and most of all myself, under yet additional pleasant obligations which will ever remain with us a happy memory. And now that we are about to part I would convey to you our respectful farewell, and assure you it is our sincere prayer that the blessing of God may rest upon you both, and on all dear to you, enriching you evermore with His grace and peace.'

The Lord High Commissioner then addressing the Assembly said :—

'Right Reverend and Right Honourable, you have now reached the close of your arduous labours, and it is my privilege before dissolving the Assembly to address to you a few words by way of congratulation and farewell. It will be my pleasing duty at the request of your Right Reverend Moderator to convey to the Queen the assurance of your devoted and affectionate regard, and to inform her of the faithfulness and efficiency with which you have discharged your duties.' He said he had carefully read the reports made to the Assembly, and followed the discussions on them, and he spoke with commendation of the Church's work. He made particular reference to the reports on the Home Mission, the Foreign Mission (specifying the African Mission), the Endowment Scheme, Church Reform, Temperance.

‘ You have had to deal with questions of vital importance affecting the character of the ministry and the welfare of the Church . . . ; and, on more than one occasion, you have had to perform the most painful duty which can fall to this court. . . . Right Reverend and Right Honourable, I have to thank you for the kindly sentiments which by the voice of the Right Reverend Moderator you have expressed towards Lady Tweeddale and myself.’ Here he spoke also of the cordial reception from the Lord Provost and Magistrates and the people. ‘ To you, Right Reverend Sir, I desire to offer my warm thanks and those of Lady Tweeddale for the kind and graceful words of leave-taking which you have spoken in name of the Assembly. I have to congratulate you on a term of office during which you have fully displayed that grasp of business which was expected of you, as one who is an unrivalled authority on questions of ecclesiastical law and procedure. I have to congratulate you on the earnest and thoughtful address to which we have just listened ; and also, let me add, on the very beautiful thanksgiving service which you conducted here some days ago, than which nothing could have expressed more perfectly our gratitude to the Almighty for the prolonged reign of our

beloved Queen. I now dissolve this General Assembly in the Queen's name, and appoint the next General Assembly to meet on Thursday, the nineteenth day of May one thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight.'

Then was sung the latter part of the 122nd Psalm, beginning, 'Pray that Jerusalem may have peace and felicity,' and the benediction was pronounced. The members of Assembly lined the corridors in honour of the Commissioner and Lady Tweeddale.

For one hundred and fifty years (1750-1900) the General Assembly seems to have met constantly on a Thursday in May, and closed on the tenth day of its sittings, which fell on Monday. On the evening of Monday accordingly our Assembly came to an end. The evening of the next day found the moderator in a very different scene—presiding at 'the moderator's dinner.' We may suppose that at first this was of the nature of a homely company of friends; and personal friends, of course, were still his first thought. But it had now grown to be a very grand affair. Invitations were sent to the Commissioner (who, however, was off to make his report to the Queen), his chaplain and purse-bearer, ex-moderators, Assembly officials, conveners of the

principal committees. To these add dignitaries ecclesiastical, legal, municipal, academic, literary, military, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Moderators of the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, the Sheriff of the moderator's county, and so on.

Since the Assembly in 1901 changed the day of its meeting to Tuesday, the closing on the tenth day falls on Friday. The dinner survived only two years, the last being in 1902. I think it no loss. The moderator's lady now gives one or two 'At Homes.'

A new kind of pastoral was instituted by this Assembly. A committee had been appointed by the previous Assembly on Legislation and Church Reform. The moderator (Dr. Scott) was convener, and the agent and Dr. John Macleod, vice-conveners. Dr. Macleod had been the moving spirit from the beginning. Their report extended to two hundred and twenty-four pages, and was dealt with in sections. One of the recommendations adopted by the Assembly I give summarily:—

A pastoral charge, drawn up by a committee, to be issued yearly on the general work of the Church and anything requiring special notice; kirk-sessions to deliberate on it before the end

of October, and resolve as to implementing its instructions ; ministers immediately thereafter to read it to their congregations with the session's resolutions ; the 'charge,' with an appendix of the enactments to which it refers, to be printed both separately and in the volume of reports ; this volume, as soon as received by the minister, to be laid before the kirk-session for the special consideration of the 'charge.'

Our 'charge' speaks for itself in the volume of reports for 1897, as was here ordered. Notwithstanding the prominent place given in the constitution of the Church to the duty of exercising discipline in regard to moral and professional conduct, and purity of doctrine ; and notwithstanding that the public are prone to say we are neglectful of discipline, and to insinuate that ministers make of themselves a close corporation to shield each other from the treatment they deserve ; yet certain irresponsible persons betook themselves to the public press very angry over our notice of cases of discipline (though we indicated neither person nor place), especially the case of doctrine. The point was raised at next Assembly, but without a seconder. A motion to have pastorals approved by the Assembly was rejected. Then it was moved and agreed that no pastoral

be issued 'this year.' So ended this part of the scheme of reform. In truth the terms of the proposal probably outstepped the zeal of those on whom its execution depended.

The case of doctrine was the Kilmun case. Mr. Robinson, a young minister—not two years ordained—published a book entitled *The Saviour in the Newer Light*. It was of a character that could not possibly be overlooked. Among much besides it made the doctrine of our Lord's Divinity untenable. The case came before the Assembly of 1896 which found the libel relevant, the authorship confessed, all the counts (five in number) proven; suspended him for a year; ordered the withdrawal of the book, and instructed him to appear before next Assembly at a time now fixed to state whether he is prepared to repudiate the teaching now condemned. He appeared at the time appointed; and in name and by appointment of the Assembly the question was put from the chair by me: 'Do you repudiate the teaching condemned by last Assembly in the book libelled?' And he answered: 'I do not.' At a subsequent diet six motions were made and seconded. Two were withdrawn. In the end the first defeated the third by three hundred and ten to one hundred and thirty-four. The third had

proposed severe censure. The first had been moved by Dr. Scott, seconded by Dr. Norman Macleod, and later supported by Dr. Story. It continued the suspension till the first meeting of presbytery within a month, at which, if he resigned his charge, he was to be suspended *sine die*, and, failing resignation, he was to be deposed and no appeal received. The latter of these alternatives came to pass.

Only fifteen years ago a place was given to the moderator in the Scale of General Precedence. In Scotland after the Royal Family and the Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly come, during their term of office and within their own bounds, lords lieutenants of counties, lord provosts of cities and sheriffs-principal; then the Lord Chancellor of Great Britain; and after him the Moderator of the General Assembly during his term of office. In England his place is after the junior bishop, and before the baron of the oldest creation.

It came about in this way. The Marquess of Breadalbane was Commissioner in 1893-4-5. He was also Lord Steward of Her Majesty's Household. Principal Story who was moderator in 1894 brought under his notice that there was no

defined place for the moderator. The Marquess looked into the question and set forth the case in a letter which was laid before the Queen. The matter was taken up, and was settled in January 1895.

From that time the moderator has been styled 'Right Reverend' during his term of office. This style occurs immediately afterwards for the first time in the Assembly records when at the opening of the Assembly of 1896 it is written that sermon in the High Church was by 'The Right Rev. Donald Macleod, Moderator of the Assembly of 1895.' This is the first authoritative use of the title. The Queen also gave instructions that ex-moderators should be styled 'Very Reverend' in the Court Circular. They are not so styled in the records of the Assembly; nor is any minister there styled even Rev., but simply Mr. or Dr.

Speaking in the Assembly members address the moderator as 'Moderator,' or 'Sir'; and a Standing Order says, 'Every speaker shall address the moderator only'—an obvious essential for good order. So in the House of Commons. It is therefore a breach of order for a member to address 'fathers and brethren,' not to mention that apparently one might after this manner say 'father or brother' in personal altercation. In

an outburst of deeply emotional appeal one might be excused for 'fathers and brethren'; but I have never heard such appeals, and in other circumstances from every point of view I like it not.

For more than two hundred years the letter of the Sovereign has addressed the Assembly as 'Right Reverend and Well-Beloved'; and previous to that the only difference was that instead of the first two words there was 'Trustie' or 'Reverend Trustie.' When the Assembly is addressed in a set speech from the Crown bench or the moderator's chair the mode is 'Right Reverend and Right Honourable.' It is the form of addressing the Assembly as a whole, even if there should be no member having a right to the one title or the other. The fact of its being used by the moderator shows that no part of the title is exclusively his. When the Assembly is spoken *about* (and not *to*) it is called 'The Venerable.'

I may here say that the word 'House' is misapplied to the General Assembly. This body is neither the 'House' of Lords, nor the 'House' of Commons, nor even the 'House' of Presbyters. It is greater, grander than all. It is the General Assembly of the Church, known by this name

alone in law—ecclesiastical and civil. The last vestige of ‘House’ has now disappeared from the Standing Orders. While I am speaking of these Orders, is it permissible to tell that when I first moved for voting by cards I had not a single supporter in the committee? ‘The previous question’ has fortunately not got among us. Viscount Peel has told me that the procedure required in putting it caused such endless embarrassment in the House of Commons that when he was Speaker it was given up. Having been deliberately cast out of the House of Commons, it would ill become the Church to take it in—especially when no one who has ever made the attempt has been able to tell what question he meant!

On the day of the Assembly’s thanksgiving over the diamond jubilee of the Queen, at the conclusion of the worship an address to the Queen was read and approved, and the Committee on the Arrangements of the Assembly was instructed to see to its proper presentation.¹

But before this took place the Church had

¹ The signing of the address is in this manner:—‘Signed in our name, in our presence, and at our appointment, by Wm. Mair, D.D., Moderator.’

received an invitation to be present at the great demonstration in London on the 22nd June—such a gathering and such a demonstration as the world had never seen. Our representatives were the moderator, the clerks, the agent, and the convener of the Business Committee. We were received on that morning by the dean and chapter of St. Paul's with the utmost courtesy, and were conducted to seats on the steps of St. Paul's immediately adjoining those occupied by the prelates of the Church of England and the representatives of the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. On the 25th, the Queen gave a garden party in the grounds of Buckingham Palace at which I was present.

Some time afterwards a medal was sent me 'to be worn in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of Her Majesty's reign.' On the one side is a medallion of the Queen with the words 'Victoria D.G. Regina et Imperatrix F.D.,' and on the obverse the following words, surmounted by a crown and surrounded by a wreath of the rose, thistle and shamrock, 'In commemoration of the sixtieth year of the reign of Queen Victoria, 20th June 1897.'

It was Her Majesty's pleasure that the Assembly's address to her should be presented at Balmoral

on Thursday, 7th October—my sixth eventful Thursday. In such functions the practice is that the persons to accompany the moderator are the mover and seconder of the address, and the officials of the Assembly, viz., the two clerks, and two law advisers. On this occasion these pairs were Dr. Scott of St. George's and Mr. Wenley, Bank of Scotland; Principal Story and Dr. Macleod; Mr. (soon to be Sir) John Cheyne, and Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Menzies. Travelling by railway the day before (in company with a deputation from the University of Edinburgh on similar duty) we arrived at Ballater for dinner, and spent the night there. Next day, after having our group photographed, we set out in carriages. It was a crisp October morning. Arrived at Balmoral we got into our robes, and in due time were instructed and marshalled by Sir Fleetwood Edwards, the principal private secretary. The moderator went foremost. On my right, a little in advance, was Sir Fleetwood. We did as he did—walking, bowing, stopping, with him. When we came first into the Royal presence we bowed, and again when we halted at perhaps a yard and a half from the Queen. Lord Balfour of Burleigh, Secretary for Scotland, was minister in attendance, and

stood at the Queen's right hand, a few inches back. On her left were three ladies, of whom one was Lady Lytton. As I looked up from bowing I received from Lord Balfour a slight nod and immediately began the address. At its conclusion Her Majesty, quick as a flash, put out her hand as far as her knee with a movement which was a perfect combination of pleasure to receive and command to deliver, such that one felt as if neither breath nor motion must intervene, and, bowing low, I placed the roll in her hand. She passed it to Lord Balfour, and then replied as follows :—

I thank you for your loyal and dutiful address, and for your warm congratulations on the completion of the sixtieth year of My reign.

I unite with you in gratitude to Almighty God, by whose providence so many blessings have been bestowed upon My country ; and I bespeak your prayers for a continuance of His mercies.

I gladly avail myself of this opportunity to renew the assurance of My attachment to the Church of Scotland, of whose loyalty to My Throne and Person I have received so many proofs ; and I pray that the blessing of God may attend your efforts to promote the advancement of true religion amongst the people committed to your charge.

It was then my part to present the mover and seconder of the address. I announced in full

voice, 'The mover of the address—the Very Rev. Dr. Scott,' who thereupon passed between the Queen and me, and on bended knee kissed hands; 'The seconder of the address—Mr. Wenley,' who did likewise. Then instantly we bowed and walked backwards (our faces to the Queen), the way by which we had come, bowing again at right time and place, and so passed out.

With the exception of the speaking, the ceremony was very mechanical. The speaking of the Queen has been much and justly admired. She filled the words with her fine voice, and enunciated them completely and distinctly; her modulation also for the natural expression of meaning was perfect. No sound broke the stillness but the Queen's voice and the moderator's. After the function there was a large luncheon of thirty—not with the Queen.

On this occasion Sir John Cheyne was knighted. None of the rest of us was present at the ceremony.

Among the engagements of this year I enjoyed none so much as speaking to the Divinity students of my old *Alma Mater*. The moderatorship led to my reopening the following churches after renovation—Gordon, Thursday, 19th August 1897; Savoch (in which I worshipped as a child, and which I had seen in course of erection), Sabbath,

5th September 1897 ; Mertoun, Wednesday, 21st December 1898 ; Crichton, Thursday, 11th May 1899.

The revolving year sweeps round swift as ever, and I in turn am now the retiring moderator. The evening before the opening of next Assembly I am at Holyrood and see the keys of the city presented by the Lord Provost and Magistrates with all deference and loyalty to the Lord High Commissioner, and by him most graciously returned. Dinner follows, and I have my old place and duties. Next morning I attend the levee, and in the procession from that to St. Giles' my carriage follows next to the Commissioner's. The procession had been used to take the route by Calton Hill and Waterloo Place to Princes Street, and thence up the North Bridge and High Street. But in 1896 and 1897 the bridge was in process of being widened and raised, and the street made of a uniform gradient. The procession therefore went by the Mound, and it has kept to this route ever since.

In the worship at St. Giles' my text was: 'To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth

my voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth ? And when he had said this, he went out again ' (John xviii. 37, 38). The sermon was afterwards published under the title *Truth-seeking*. From St. Giles' I drove to the Assembly Hall, and in the chair constituted the meeting with prayer. The morning had brought intelligence of the death of Mr. Gladstone, and in harmony with the feelings of the leaders, the event had a place in our prayer. Having spoken a few sentences of thanks and retrospection, what Dr. Scott had done for me a year before (pp. 216, 218) I now did for my successor Dr. Leishman ; and, where I had then stepped up, I now stepped down.

There have been, I believe, two hundred and thirty moderators, and of these one hundred and fifty are portrayed in likenesses hung in one of the rooms that were added to the hall. It is to the unflagging diligence of the Rev. Dr. Weir, formerly minister of Greyfriars', Dumfries, that we owe this interesting collection ; and he has also collected and got bound up a number of concluding addresses.

CHAPTER IX

PREACHING

NOTHING has ever had for me an interest so living and unfailing as the minister in the pulpit. Even Church Law, with all my work on it, is nowhere in comparison. This is by no means the first time that I have written on the subject. It formed a section in my line of thought in addressing the Assembly of 1897. It occupies a chapter in *Speaking*, first published in 1900. It had its part in a speech on lapsing from religion in the Assembly of 1902, substantially reproduced in *Life and Work* for August under the title 'The Root of the Matter.' Again in that magazine, August 1904, I wrote under the heading, 'The Pure Evangel,' suggested by Principal Story when in a fine speech on John Knox in the Assembly of that year he said, 'We have fallen from the pure Evangel.'

I have already mentioned two lines of preparation taken when a student (p. 52). When I became a preacher, being convinced that ordinarily the purpose of preaching is better served by speak-

ing without manuscript, I at first committed my sermons to memory, and so thoroughly that I could give them with all the natural effect of unwritten speech. This in my case was great drudgery, and took almost all the working hours of two days. I saw that the time might come when it would have to be given up, but meantime it seemed to be duty. Thorough though the committing was, I always took the manuscript to the pulpit, from a feeling that not to do so would be presumption deserving a fall. This, I suppose, was because, so far as I saw, all our ministers read their sermons. I had no doubt the feeling would vanish in presence of a good reason for leaving the manuscript at home. That reason came. When about to enter on one of the temporary engagements that I have mentioned, a neighbouring minister told me that the people 'hated the very sight of the paper.' I was glad to hear it. On the morrow I went without the paper; and from that day forth, except on a few special occasions, it has never seen the pulpit. For a time I continued committing, but gradually found it was unnecessary; and my practice has been after faithful study to preach from notes—occupying about a page of the Bible. I have not once preached from old notes. I have never preached

with spectacles ; they make the eye meaningless to the hearer, and also, in my case, the hearer's eye meaningless to the speaker.

To be able to preach without even notes has often stood me in good stead. On two occasions in particular it was put to a severe test. Once I had with me a Free Church friend, a college class-fellow, who wished to do me the favour of giving me a Sunday. In the pulpit he was reading out verses of a psalm to be sung immediately before the sermon, and at the fourth line became slower, feebler, ceased and fell, having fainted. I went with those who took him to the vestry, got my gown and bands, and returned while the verses were being sung. We then prayed and I took a passage of Scripture and preached. It was six weeks ere my friend could return to his lonely home, and half that time he was confined to bed. At the induction of Mr. Martin at Lauder in December 1876 no little anxiety was caused in the presbytery when at the last moment the minister of Stow, who had been appointed to preside, had not arrived. As it happened that I was moderator of the presbytery for that half year they laid the duty on me. Of necessity I conducted the service from beginning to end without a written word. On those occasions

I had nothing but pleasure in the work ; and it is my belief that the services would not have so well served their purpose if I had been what is called ‘ prepared ’ for them.

The General Assembly in 1856 passed a Declaratory Act that there should be included in the service of every Lord’s Day, not only a sermon, but a lecture on a passage of Holy Scripture. (This apparently might be at different diets where there were more than one.) In my two parishes part of the service, till I began to have assistants (in 1890), was the continuous exposition of Scripture—a most valuable and delightful exercise. I think that in this I most relished the Gospel according to John, the Epistle to the Romans, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Psalms. The last of such expositions at Ardoch began with the fortieth chapter of Isaiah, but came to an end with the forty-ninth, when my ministry there ended. At Earlston, after ten years, I turned to the beginning of the Bible and, working straight through it, had reached the twenty-fourth chapter of Proverbs. The subject of the sermon was always related to something salient in, or illustrated by, the lecture.

Respecting prayer, my record is that for my first occupancy of the pulpit—when the presbytery at

my licensing sent me to Old Machar—I wrote and committed a prayer, but had little more than begun it in the pulpit when heart and mind broke away from it. I never wrote another before or since for myself, except as moderator in 1897. Nor have I fallen into ruts. Here I must express my regret at the apparently increasing use of prayer repeated from memory or read from paper. It makes one fear for the great and valuable gift to the Church of free prayer, and recalls us anew to the duty which is thus expressed in the Directory : ‘ putting forth themselves to exercise the gift of prayer with which our Lord Jesus Christ pleaseth to furnish all His servants whom He calls to that office.’ There is no comparison between free prayer and prayer read, or said from memory, for bringing men truly into the Presence for communion and for rendering spontaneous and unfettered worship, and opening the heart for copious blessing.

After the manuscript of this was in the hands of the publisher I had a happy quarter of an hour over a letter by Dr. Maclaren of Manchester. It was written on 27th March 1877 to a young minister, and is given in the *British Weekly* of 12th January 1911. Not his views only, but also his practice, were the same as mine have been, both in prayer and preaching.

The saying of the Lord's Prayer should not be faster, or indeed so fast, as the rest of the praying. The words of our Lord call for a reverence that forbids speed, and the fulness of meaning in every phrase is too great for rapid thinking. I have also heard what has led me to similar thought and feeling about the doxology, 'Glory be to the Father,' etc.

A preacher in the sense of our Churches is one who has attended the classes of certain professors, passed the examinations of certain courts or boards, produced certain certificates of character, and received the authority ('licence') of the presbytery. So far well. But there is risk that this process of production authoritatively prescribed, kept so much before the eye, and making so great a demand on the energies, may overshadow or displace that which is of infinitely greater importance. And my experience says it would be well to give heed that the proper place is preserved for the great truth that there can be no preacher in the Scripture sense without the teaching of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. Rather let our own education be dispensed with than this; and when this essential teaching displays itself in circumstances where it is

practically impossible to observe the whole of the Church's rules, there ought to be some provision to prevent so great a gift being lost to the ministry.

Next comes the status of the preacher. Every Church sufficiently defines this in relation to all his superiors, inferiors, or equals in the Church. And this is doubtless of great importance. But the most correct and complete recognition of all that it involves does not exhaust the meaning or the responsibility of the preacher's status. He has a status scriptural as well as ecclesiastical, divine as well as human. He is a commissioner of the Great King, the King of Glory, head over all things to the Church. The preacher is sent by Him to speak in His name to the lost and the found, the learned and the unlearned. This is a status that might well overawe us, were it not for His assurance that His presence and gracious aids will not fail His faithful servant. After all these years I know of nothing more fitted to attune the heart and mind of the preacher to the proper discharge of his commission than the conscious, active realising of this status. And likewise on the hearer's side there is nothing that so opens the way for the message as to bring him face to face with God and His Christ. Get him really and actually to look the Lord Jesus in the

face concerning the matter in hand. Ask him, and help him, to do it there and then. All occasions of public worship ought to bring every worshipper into the immediate presence of the infinite and eternal God—the holy and sin-hating—the loving and forgiving—God and His Christ.

Now we come to the message. I know that the preacher who has fixed in his heart the name of Him for whom he is to speak has practically settled what his message must be. He must hear the word at his Master's mouth and deliver it from Him. The word is nigh him, even in his mouth and in his heart. It concerns the King Himself as He is revealed in the Scriptures, Christ Jesus—the eternal Son of God, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and died for our sins, and rose again and is alive for evermore, interceding and reigning, and who will come again in glory to judge the world; with the vast expanse of relative truth, doctrinal and practical, which fills the pages of the Old and New Testaments—deeper than the depths, higher than the heavens, touching every possible condition of the soul and destiny of man—from sin, condemnation and doom, to glory, honour and immortality—the whole a direct message from God and His Christ to man for man's sake. The preacher will find

that just in proportion as these things supply the matter of his preaching and warm and delight his own soul, in that proportion will it be of value. And he would do well to test it from time to time by taking some outstanding truth and asking himself if it holds the same place in his religious thinking and speaking as it does in the New Testament? Is it made as prominent and influential? Are questions of conduct and heart-management settled and expounded in the light of it? For example, suppose he is exhorting to the practice of some Christian grace, is care taken to make the hearer feel that it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, and can grow only in the life of those that are rooted in Christ Jesus?

Since the pew has become my place I have heard a minister making common sense the chief saviour from worry, and it never seemed to occur to him that anything higher might be wanted, or could be had. At least he did not say so. Another I have heard discoursing on 'God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of Christ,' who contrived to speak the whole time without suggesting that Christ died for our sins. Another I have heard exhorting the young not to put off 'becoming religious.' It is painful, it is pitiful to hear or to read, as one sometimes does, preachers struggling to speak or write

something out of 'the beaten track,' as they would call it; something ingenious, entertaining; a collection of fancies into which only the smallest pinch of Scripture has been dropped—such preaching, in short, as can hardly be associated with, and certainly does not convey to the hearer, a true conception of Christ and His message. In the Assembly of 1902 I quoted from a leader in an outstanding newspaper of a few months before: 'The Churches have in fact gone out of the soul-saving business, as any one who goes to church on Sundays, and keeps tolerably awake during the sermon must know.' The article concludes to the effect that it might be incongruous to wish them God speed. How ought such words to affect us? Scriptural preaching 'old fashioned!' This I have seen, that there is nothing that preserves the dew and freshness of youth like the truths of Scripture—no teaching that is so universally craved for. Witness the perpetual popularity of Spurgeon's sermons. From the pen of Dr. Horton I have read that when ill-health made him an occupant of the pew for long weeks, he learned how often the hungry sheep must have looked up to him in the pulpit, and not been fed. What he needed and enjoyed in the pew was 'the sincere milk of the word'; and he knew not how to

describe the utter futility of merely human disquisition. I remember A. J. Balfour calling our great Gospel truths 'the essential jewels of our splendid religion.' Jewels are for flashing their beauty and value in the light.

The feeling has grown upon me—quickenened in no small degree by the change that has been coming over the conditions and habits of life—that we have no claim to be listened to by our fellowmen except as we deliver the message of God and His Christ, and as we do it in His name, and as those who are in living touch with the living, reigning Saviour.

When we have determined the matter of the message we are come to the manner of presenting it. I have found that the universal need and desire of learned and unlearned is to have it set forth clearly and simply. This alone is appropriate for a message of an origin so high and of importance so great. When I reached the age at which young people of any seriousness and intelligence wish to get clear views of Christian truth, I was still a hearer of the various preachers that supplied Savoch (p. 9). From the prayers I picked up parts for my own use. From the preaching I sought earnestly to know what made a Christian, and if I was one myself. Out of so many teachers

—excellent men all—not one helped me in these things. It seemed as if everything was mixed up. At one time the hearers appeared to be treated as if all were Christians; at another, as if not one of them was so; at another, as if every one of them was half and half. This experience so burned into my soul that I very early resolved that, if I should ever reach the pulpit, the meanest capacity should understand, and no one fail to hear clearly and simply what the offer of salvation is, and how to get and use and enjoy the blessing of it for time and eternity. I would therefore say nothing that was not so arranged, and expressed in such words and sentences, and so uttered, that every hearer might follow. A lifetime and many a testimony have proved to me the importance of that resolution. If it is needful for the sake of those who desire to be taught, it is much more needful for the careless. So far for the young or unlearned, and what says a Lord Chancellor? Lord Chancellor Cairns, who often attended the meetings of Mr. Moody, the evangelist, confessed he had got a new conception of preaching from him, and said to Lord Shaftesbury: ‘The simplicity of that man’s preaching, the clear manner in which he sets forth salvation by Christ, is to

me the most striking and delightful thing I ever knew in my life.' And that prince of preachers, Dr. Maclaren of Manchester, has spoken out strongly, giving it as an explanation why so many are unaffected by our preaching (including his own) that a large number do not understand it. How can I but take pleasure from hearing in old age such testimonies to what I have been saying earnestly from my boyhood up !

One thing still remains—the part to be taken by the living voice in presenting the message. I have grown weary of wondering why so very many ministers do not take the trouble (however great it may be) to master at least a few of the essential elements of effective speech—complete formation and perfect audibility of every word—not only spoken but *sent, propelled* ; and the expression of the varying subject-matter, according to its mood and purpose, after the manner natural to our common humanity, and in a degree that is felt. The late Principal Marcus Dods, having said that admirable matter may be nullified by the speaking of it, added : ‘ It is pitiable to think how much waste goes on weekly in Scotland in this respect.’

It is impossible to overrate the importance of

preaching. Nothing that contributes to its power is to be thought lightly of. If any man should boast of his thinking, we ask him what is the worth of it, if it cannot be carried effectively home to others. A missile of an ounce weight driven home accomplishes more than one of a pound weight that cannot be discharged or misses the mark.

I have just read over what I have said in *Speaking* (pp. 118, 119) on the subject of reading or not reading the sermon. I find it to be an unanswerable enforcement of the duty of young men to do their best to acquire the power to speak untrammelled by 'the paper.'

Akin to this is the subject of the essay style for the pulpit. It is by the nature of the case excluded. The preacher is called to speak to the people—not to give off impersonal matter spoken in their presence—and they come that they may be spoken to. With the special authority of Christ the preacher is far greater than the essayist or moralist. He must maintain in his own soul and uphold in his hearers a due sense that the matters dealt with are divine, and that it is God with whom they have to do—Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

By these words I am reminded that, whatever

secondary or third-rate considerations the preacher may use to enforce his theme, this highest view of all he must never allow to be unfelt. It is pre-eminently, distinctively, the view that we are commanded to keep before mankind. To overlook this is to take down the hearer to a plane where there is truly no sense of duty at all, but where all manner of inferior feelings and considerations jostle each other and have their sway. An illustration of this within my knowledge occurred in an appeal which was being addressed, not twenty years ago, to the Divinity students at one of our Universities, by one having authority to speak for the Foreign Mission. He emphasised that the very best of them were wanted for the work, meaning no doubt to show how great and worthy the work was—as honourable as the best charge at home. But the best men seldom rate themselves high, and the effect was that men who were ready to go were led to feel themselves unqualified. He spoke of the position in the mission field as of more social importance than a minister's at home, and of the stations where they were wanted as being good places to live in. The effect was that the young men being quite content with the social position of a minister at home, and with Scotland as a place to live in, were unimpressed.

Now, instead of all this, their whole spiritual being would have been moved by a few heart-felt sentences bringing them and mission work into the presence of Him whom they loved and were ready to serve, and who loved them and gave Himself for them, and not for them only, but for their brethren also in the dark places of the earth. That which is here illustrated is of universal application.

Ministers of Christ are not only to preach, but to beseech. His first ministers did this. Ever and again as from the bottom of their hearts—and, what is more, as the entreaty of the heart of God—we hear the voice of their appeal, ‘I beseech you.’ Where is that voice now? The power of appeal has departed from the pulpit. If the words on rare occasions should appear on the manuscript, of what use are they if they are spoken as when one only conveys a little information? Why should they move the hearer when the speaker is unmoved? It may be that though the speaker feels, he cannot express what he feels; but if so, we ask again what is the good of that? Why has he not mastered the utterance of all the tones of the voice? ‘Having done this,’ we would say to the young minister, ‘think—till the fire burns within you—think how God yearns over your people with

the love which gave His Son for them ; and has sent you as His ambassador to beseech them ; and has given them to you to love and care for that you may present them every one perfect in Christ Jesus. They desire to regard you as speaking in the name of God ; let them have no cause to wonder that they never find you pleading as He would plead. The things of which we preach are of supreme and eternal importance. Do not let them think that you doubt it ; do not let them wonder that your love never breaks out in earnest entreaty over that which concerns them so deeply.' Every definite truth in the sermon should be made to press in on the heart and conscience as a practical thing. Time was when Mr. Gladstone could say that the distinctive note of preaching in the Scottish churches was that of a wrestling with the hearer.

Ministers have need to guard against assuming that all their respectable hearers, young or old, have definitely accepted Christ and surrendered to Him. I have known very many who had been under various ministrics and of whom, after all, it was not true. ' Doing the work of an evangelist ' can never be thought unnecessary. Such preaching when freshly and really done has also a wonderful power to minister blessing even to the ripest Christian.

Am I mistaken in the feeling that, generally speaking, there is a much greater difference between the preaching of the Apostles and ours than there should be? It seems to me they keep men more in touch with the amazing and massive facts on which Christian faith must rest and build, and by which Christian life and action and hope are sustained—Christ crucified for our sins, raised from the dead, received up into glory, sitting at the right hand of God, interceding, giving gifts, reigning till all His enemies are made His footstool, and coming in His glory; also the indwelling, and the great power and constant need, of the Holy Ghost. They seek to convince of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to fill our thoughts and impress our souls with a sense of the glory of God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They rejoice in the grandeur and blissfulness of their message, and glow with the thought of the glory that shall be to Father, Son and Holy Ghost by the redemption of the world. They never let us away from the high motive, ‘as to the Lord, and not unto men,’ ‘Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.’ We cannot imagine them picking a snippet of a text out of its context to excite curiosity, or as a peg to hang a sermon on; or seeking to entertain, or to display cleverness,

or elicit applause. They make us feel that their aim is to impress, to constrain, to make us stand in awe and not sin, to keep us hand in hand with the Saviour, to enlarge our hearts and cheer our way. They would have us to be always hearing the voice 'from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' A few years ago a great deal used to be said about presenting the old truths in a new way. I have never listened to an attempt of this kind without finding that in the process the very essence and worth and use of the old truth had evaporated.

CHAPTER X

PATRONAGE AND CONFLICT—FORMULA— ECCLESIASTICS

ON an overture in 1866 from the presbytery of Edinburgh, supported by Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Smith, North Leith, the Assembly by a majority of fifty to forty-six, 'having respect to the advantages that would accrue from the modification of the system of patronage in the present circumstances of the Church and country,' appointed a committee to consider the subject and report to next Assembly—Dr. Pirie and Professor Mitchell, joint-conveners. The subject came up year after year. In 1869 the terms of a petition to Parliament were agreed on, and a committee appointed to take all necessary steps for carrying the purpose of the Assembly into effect—the moderator (Dr. Norman Macleod of the Barony parish) and Dr. Pirie, joint-conveners. A deputation headed by Dr. Macleod had an interview with Mr. Gladstone, Prime Minister; but it profited nothing. A general election placed Mr. Disraeli in power in 1874, and Mr. Edward

Strathearn Gordon became a second time Lord Advocate.¹ He was a convinced and earnest supporter of the abolition of patronage. A Government Bill was introduced into the House of Lords by the Duke of Richmond. It was laid before the Assembly of that year by the committee, and they were instructed to receive suggestions and report to a future diet. No fewer than thirty-five suggestions were reported. Three of them were adopted, some negatived, most withdrawn; and a petition in favour of the Bill was unanimously agreed on. It bore that in the opinion of the petitioners it would be 'productive of the best effects on the ecclesiastical relations of the people of Scotland.' The Bill with a few liberalising touches by Parliament on strictly Church lines came into operation as law on the 1st January 1875. Mr. Gladstone strenuously opposed the Bill, but it was supported by thirty-two Scottish members as against twenty-five. I took no active part in this matter, but voted for the change as demanded by circumstances.

¹ In 1876 Mr. Gordon was created Baron Gordon of Drumearn as Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, along with Lord Blackburn of Killearn. These were the first appointments as legal life peers to the House of Lords. The dignity does not descend. In the year of her diamond jubilee Queen Victoria made the children of legal life peers 'Honourable.'

Principal Rainy's biographer says (i. p. 261): 'No one can survey Scottish ecclesiastical history from the Disruption till to-day without perceiving that over the Patronage Act the Established Church lost her great and really last practical chance for reuniting Scottish Presbyterianism on an establishment basis.' Yet Principal Rainy in his valedictory address at the closing of the session of the New College, on 28th March 1894, is reported in the *Scotsman* thus: 'He had never seen the time or the case in which it appeared to him that a movement in the direction he had spoken of could be made without plainly betraying the principles of the Free Church and the trust committed to her.' The 'movement' was for union on an establishment basis. Dr. Simpson must for the moment have forgotten the Principal, for a chance, with him against it, was no chance at all. The Church had not the chance that the biographer suggests.

Nor must it be supposed that the principal movers for the removal of patronage were careless of what was courteous or dutiful toward other Churches, or were inconsiderate of the possibilities for good involved in the situation. In particular Professors Mitchell and Charteris strove to enlist in the cause of reform and reunion the sympathies

of Free Church brethren whom they knew, and to ascertain what those who had left us would desire to get in addition in order to open the way for our being once more united in one Church. But the answer which they received to their private advances was not such as to encourage more public overtures.

It need not be concealed that there were one or two strong men in the Church of Scotland who feared that union would place an embargo on progressive thought in theology. What almost immediately began to happen in the Free Church turns this into an amusing illustration of how men who think they know may be surprised by facts into the discovery that their judgment had been wrong.

No doubt can be thrown on the honesty of the promoters of the Patronage Act when they put it forward as 'a measure of conciliation.' But its effect was the very contrary. And it is probably true that this was in some degree aggravated by the unwise use made of it by some admirers of it, and by others who did not understand the position of either the one Church or the other. Howbeit no one need wonder that great displeasure was produced in the Free Church, and overtures from many presbyteries raised the

question of Disestablishment in their General Assembly as early as 1873. The Assembly spoke out in 1874; and in 1877 definitely pronounced for Disestablishment.

This year also the English Liberation Society, and a newly formed Scottish branch of it, began to agitate. In 1881 the leader of each of the other two principal Churches entered on a regular agitation throughout the country. At last our General Assembly appointed a committee known as the Church Interests Committee. It confined itself to the distribution of information till, in 1885 (Mr. Gladstone, Prime Minister), a Bill was introduced into Parliament by a private member for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church, and was put down for second reading on the 6th May. It was known as Dick Peddie's Bill. Immediately petitions against it were poured in till they numbered 1258, bearing 688,195 signatures—revealing more general sympathy with our Church than had been anticipated. The second reading was not reached.

The Church by its committee proceeded to organise parochial defence associations, defence meetings, constituency committees, and the distribution of literature.

In 1885 Dr. Cameron gave notice in the House

of Commons that in the new Parliament (the election of which was imminent, and took place in the summer of 1886) he would move that 'in the opinion of this House the Church of Scotland should be disestablished and disendowed.' The result was that although the crucial question of the general election was Home Rule for Ireland, every effort was made by the opponents of the Church to pledge candidates to vote for Dr. Cameron's resolution. Indeed, it was generally supposed that Disestablishment was expected in return for support of Home Rule. All this led to corresponding determination and activity on the part of the Assembly's committee. The resolution was moved and negatived on the 30th March 1886 (Mr. Gladstone, Prime Minister), when of Scottish members twenty-five voted for, and seventeen against it. Again in 1888 (Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister), Dr. Cameron's resolution was negatived, when thirty-eight Scottish members voted for, and twenty against it.

In the early eighties Principal Rainy had been pressing Mr. Gladstone, who said there must be a clear public demand. On the 11th November 1885, in the Free Church Assembly Hall, he caused surprise and acute disappointment by declining to take up Disestablishment. It would divide

the Liberal party. It could not be a test question in Scotland without being so in England. Soon after the General Assembly of 1889, Mr. Gladstone at St. Austell announced that in his opinion those two votes on Dr. Cameron's resolution sufficiently and unequivocally declared the sense of Scotland. This was considered at variance with previous declarations that he would require a real reference, and real consideration in order to reach a real decision. It certainly placed the agitation for Disestablishment in a new position. On the 2nd May 1890 Dr. Cameron's resolution was again negatived (Lord Salisbury, Prime Minister), when thirty-eight Scottish members voted for, and twenty-three against it.

It was at this stage that the question arose in the Committee on Christian Life and Work whether their magazine did well to be silent. The difficulty was that there had been an unwritten rule to exclude contentious matter. I said there was much that might be written which would be instructive without being contentious. It was agreed to proceed, and I was requested to give the first paper. It appeared in August 1890, and proved to be the first of six by me. Then came much advice to publish them in a collected form.

This was done under the title of *The Truth about the Church of Scotland*; and, being sure it would soon be in demand, I had the booklet electrotyped. It might be a year afterwards that the secretary of the Church Interests Committee intimated to them a great demand for it, and they asked me on what terms they might have it as their property. I made them a gift of the plates; it was turned out in cheaper style; and while the war lasted was much sought after. From first to last upwards of 100,000 copies went out. In 1901, in response to several requests from Highland parishes, it was translated into Gaelic.

One passage in it may attain to fame if I tell who the two young gentlemen were to whom it refers. Speaking of privileges—that men boast of their own and complain of their neighbour's—it proceeds:—

Can it be that they have found a new gospel with many of the old truths awanting, and with this exhortation on every page, *Hold fast thine own privileges, and take away thy neighbour's*? Among others, two young lawyers, members of Parliament for Scotch constituencies, addressing their constituents, have been putting on a bold face against privilege. But it can only be their neighbour's privileges. For each of them has Q.C. at his own name. This stands for Queen's Counsel, and means that they belong to a privileged class, possessing advantages even over

their fellow-lawyers. Some people think they must be hypocrites. But we think they have only learned this new gospel of holding fast their own and taking away yours.

The two were the present Prime Minister and the present Secretary for War, then Mr. Asquith and Mr. Haldane, who on 27th March 1911 was raised to the dignity of Viscount Haldane of Cloan.

On the 2nd October 1891 Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Newcastle in the hope of returning to power, as he did within nine months, said: 'I will assure both Scotland and Wales that they have the unanimous support of the Liberal party' for Disestablishment. Again there came a vicious struggle in the general election.

In 1893 an announcement was made in the Speech from the Throne that bills would be introduced 'to prevent the growth of new vested interests in the ecclesiastical establishments of Scotland and Wales.' On the 9th May a Bill was introduced by a private member 'to put an end to the establishment of the Church of Scotland, and to deal with the public endowments thereof on the occurrence of vacancies.' Of Scottish members forty voted for, and fifteen against its introduction. The bills announced in the Speech from the Throne were never reached.

The Assembly of that year (1893) enjoined their committee to make every effort in defence of the Church ; and appointed Sunday the 18th June as a day of humiliation and prayer. In 1894 the committee reported additional organisations—deputies appointed for the whole country in twenty-three groups, to complete defence arrangements ; also a committee to make special arrangements for lectures and meetings.

Another general election in the summer of 1895 brought the subject again into the battlefield. The election address of nearly every candidate in the Home Rule party committed him to support Disestablishment and Disendowment. From Scotland thirty-seven were returned pledged to Disestablishment. Lord Salisbury became Prime Minister.

Next year the committee, while feeling that a great calamity to the nation had been averted, are not satisfied with the position of affairs. They recognise that the struggle is only postponed, not concluded ; and that a renewal of the attack on the Church may be confidently expected as soon as the forces against her can be successfully rallied. Again, in 1898 they report that while no ‘ external attack ’ has been made on the Church, the representatives of her opponents have intimated in

the plainest terms that as soon as 'passing drawbacks' are removed, the battle will be renewed. This has continued to be the attitude of parties, it being understood in the Church that its committee maintain a position of watchful but inoffensive preparedness. In 1901 (the year after the formation of the United Free Church) satisfaction was expressed by the Assembly that parochial organisations were nearly everywhere completed; and the instructions of 1895 were renewed. In 1902 yet another agency was reported—the delivery of historical lectures throughout the Church—and this goes on still.

It is exactly thirty years since the terms of subscription to the Confession of Faith first (in our day) drew special attention. An Act of Parliament was passed in 1693 for 'Settling the Quiet and Peace of the Church,' and for settling the terms of admission of ministers who had served under Episcopacy. It ordained *inter alia* that preachers and ministers subscribe the Confession of Faith 'declaring the same to be the confession of their faith which they will constantly adhere to.' The General Assembly had already (1690) ordained that they should 'subscribe their approbation of the Confession of Faith,' and included elders. In

1694 the Assembly adopted the terms of the Act of Parliament (but with no mention of the Act); and in 1700 required subscription before next Assembly by all, including elders.

In 1711 the General Assembly made the terms of subscription more stringent. 'The Confession of Faith' was changed into 'the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith'; and 'the true doctrine,' into 'the truths of God.'

In 1880 overtures came from the presbyteries of Paisley and Dumbarton, the latter being supported by Dr. Story. They proposed a new and different formula for elders. A committee was appointed to report to a future diet, Professor Mitchell convener; and they reported a formula for elders which, by a majority of ninety-eight to sixty-five, was sent down to presbyteries. On the rising of the Assembly I wrote a pamphlet against it—*The Elder's Formula in the Church of Scotland: A Letter to the Right Honourable Lord Polwarth*. Sixty presbyteries disapproved, and the subject had rest for seven years.

In 1887 an overture came from the presbytery of Selkirk, supported by Dr. Gloag, Galashiels, proposing to release elders from subscription, and to put certain questions to them. A committee was appointed to report to next Assembly, Dr.

Cunningham convener. A curious thing happened to me at a meeting of this committee. For some reason I had been late, and when I arrived they were in the dilemma of being equally divided as to the way in which something of no small importance should be expressed. Ignorant of everything that had been said, and of who had said it, I was made umpire. It turned out that I was on the side of Professor Mitchell as against Dr. Cunningham. Our report to next Assembly contained a proposed Act. It led to a long discussion, on no fewer than six motions. Finally it was resolved by a majority of eighty-seven to eighty-two to send down to presbyteries the Act suggested in the report. At next Assembly it was found that sixty-four presbyteries had approved, and the Assembly by a majority passed it into a standing law (1889, xvii.), entitled 'Act on Subscription of Office-bearers of the Church.' I dissented 'because, if the subscription required of elders implies that they need not accept the Confession of Faith as the confession of their faith, the enactment is incompetent and null, and therefore also misleading to elders; and if, on the other hand, the subscription required of elders implies that they do accept the Confession of Faith as the confession of their faith, the framing

of a different formula from that of ministers is unnecessary and misleading.' To this the procurator (Cheyne) and others adhered. Dr. Scott and others dissented, because the 'Act sanctions an innovation on the long-continued practice of the Church, and is calculated to mislead those for whose relief it was intended.' At the evening sederunt of that day it was resolved that before any person is asked to sign the respective formulas (for ministers or elders) 'the whole preamble of the Act be read over to him.'

This Act, ignoring the additional stringency above referred to, returned to the language prescribed by the Act of Parliament for ministers and preachers; and ordained a new Formula for elders.

In 1898 an overture came from the presbytery of Stranraer 'anent the subscription of the Formula for ministers,' but was dismissed by fifty votes to twenty-six.

Next year an overture came from the presbytery of Auchterarder, supported by Mr. Macnaughtan, anent the minister's Formula, and a committee was appointed, the procurator (Cheyne) convener, 'to consider the powers which the Church possesses of modifying the terms of the minister's Formula of adherence to the Confession of Faith, and to report to next Assembly.' Knowing that this

was purely a matter of law, and that the committee would certainly be divided, I asked that we should have authority to consult counsel, and this was granted.

The committee submitted a memorial and queries to the Dean of Faculty (Asher), Q.C., Professor Rankine, Q.C., and Mr. A. H. Briggs Constable, who also afterwards met with the convener, Dr. Mair and Mr. Macnaughtan. Subsequently they gave their opinion in writing. All these papers formed part of the report to the Assembly of 1900. The opinion was wholly opposed to the view that the Church had power to deviate from the Formula of 1693. The committee were thanked and discharged.

But the very next business on the roll was an overture from members of the Assembly, supported by Sheriff Vary Campbell, asking for an enlarged committee 'to consider the whole powers of the Church with regard to the Confession of Faith, and report to next Assembly.' The same and additional members were appointed, Principal Story convener. The report of this committee to next Assembly (1901) bore *inter alia* that so long as the Act of Parliament (1690) remains in force the Church 'acting by itself has no power to modify, abridge, or extend any article of the

Confession.' To the report was annexed a dissent extending to eighteen pages, signed by five members, among whom were Principal Story, Sheriff Vary Campbell, Dr. Cameron Lees, and Professor Menzies.

In giving in the report Principal Story took a course which, so far as I know, was never taken before or since. Instead of supporting the report, he moved and supported the adoption of the dissent. He was seconded by Sheriff Vary Campbell. I moved to receive the report, thank the committee and discharge them, and was seconded by the procurator. The subject lent importance to the speeches, and they were well reported in the *Scotsman*, which also devoted a leader to the subject.

Dr. Scott supported my motion, but moved an addition to it, which really dealt with jurisdiction, expressing confidence that it would be so exercised as not to oppress the consciences of any who 'are not certain as to some less important determinations' in the Confession; and it said, what all knew, that the ultimate authority in causes concerning the faith are 'Holy Scriptures and the Holy Spirit.' It was expedient for me to accept the addition by this mover, as the Assembly by a majority also did. But the ques-

tion before us was, if Scripture and the Holy Spirit should show that something of substantial importance in the Confession is erroneous, what course may be taken by the Church. My motion with the addition was carried by a majority.

In the biography of Principal Story it is said (p. 371): 'He and his supporters maintained that the Church had an interpretive power with regard to questions of doctrine, while Dr. Mair and others held that the Church's powers were merely disciplinary.' This sorely needs expounding. I do not, however, lay that to the charge of the biographer, for language of this sort was usual in that party. About discipline what I said was that, if one was found to have diverged from the Confession, we had power to make the ecclesiastical censure of any degree. If they claimed interpretive power; so did I. What man can apply any law without interpreting it? They claimed the power to reinterpret Scripture; so did I. They said, if new light was found, the Confession ought to be changed accordingly; so did I. They said the Church had power to make the change without reference to the State. That I denied, and said that civil law over which we had no power stood in the way. This was the sole difference between us. They called me an

Erastian, as if I had any responsibility for the law. I did but point to law and fact as they stood facing us. The other side might have been called law-breakers. When I stated the case in committee, Principal Story said: 'If that be so, we pay too dear for our relation to the State'—a view which I did not dispute.

During the debate in the Assembly there was an amusing bit of unreported play. Principal Story's seconder, asserting liberty, went so far as to say it was well known that a judge might make the law almost anything he likes. In my reply, recalling this, I said: 'I have the privilege of residing in the sherifffdom of my learned friend. Imagine me—if you can—at his bar, pleading for myself: "My Lord, you have known my manner of life, and I have had the honour of your friendship; if the law should seem at first sight to be rather against me, your Lordship will remember it was said by an eminent authority that a judge may make the law almost anything he likes."' '

In 1903 there came an overture from the presbytery of Greenock to the effect that in requiring subscription to the Formula the Assembly do now declare the Confession to be valid only in so far as it accords with Scripture interpreted by the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Story made one motion, Dr. Scott another which was ultimately accepted by Dr. Story. It went over the old ground at length, ending in the oft-repeated statement which I have just written concerning the relation of the Confession to Scripture.

The deliverances of the Assembly to be read to persons about to sign the Formula now numbered three !

A motion had also been made to appoint a committee to consider whether an approach should not be made to the Legislature in connection with the Confession and Formula, but it received little support.

A learned professor furnished the following quaint interlude: 'Dr. Mair says we have to go to Parliament; but when I ask him to go to Parliament, he won't go; why won't he go?' To which when my turn came I answered: 'Because I do not wish to befool myself: Parliament has too much business in hand to take up ours; if they should look at it they might say to me, "We see your Church does not now believe the Confession of Faith, what does it believe now?"' If Parliament did take us in, there is no saying in what shape they might turn us out. But above all, in my opinion, if this matter is to go

to Parliament, it ought to be as part of a great statesmanlike patriotic measure to be sought in company with other Churches.'

Though it happened under circumstances so very different from what I was picturing, I have always thought it rather striking that, when we did go to Parliament, both Churches were there together, and their claims put by the Government into one Bill.

In November 1904, at a meeting of the Church Interests Committee, the convener, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, submitted a memorandum on the relation of the Church to the Confession of Faith and the Formula. In view of the far-reaching importance of the judgment of the House of Lords on the 1st of August, which had turned the attention of all to the whole question in a manner that gave it a better chance of a fair hearing than ever before, the memorandum raised the question of approaching Parliament. A subsequent meeting agreed to request the Legislation Committee to formulate proposals for application to Parliament, with the view of securing to the Church the right to regulate its own affairs within and upon the Act of 1690 and the Confession of Faith, so that it should have the right to make its own formula. Early in May a Bill proposed by the

Legislation Committee was laid before the committee, who resolved that it should be submitted to the Assembly by the two committees jointly. Instead of the declaration in the old formula this Bill proposed 'a declaration of his faith in the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches therein [in the Confession] contained, according to such formula as may from time to time be prescribed by the General Assembly' with consent of presbyteries. The Assembly instructed the two committees to take steps to secure legislation on the lines indicated. I must say here that in committee, so long as it was of any use to oppose, I opposed this use of the expression 'sum and substance.' Parliament in 1690 ratifying the Confession called it the Confession of Faith containing the sum and substance of the doctrine of the Reformed Churches—plainly meaning that the Confession, itself, was the sum and substance of that doctrine. The circumlocution of the proposed declaration, therefore, was just another way of naming the Confession, and left us where we were. In the Assembly I supported going to Parliament with it, believing that now this was our best course, and having some secret hope that it might be amended at headquarters. I could not but feel gratified,

therefore, when I learned that the Government and their legal advisers would have none of it. Parliament ordained that 'The formula of subscription to the Confession of Faith' 'shall be such as may be prescribed by Act of the General Assembly, with the consent' of presbyteries. The incorporating of this enactment in the 'Churches (Scotland) Act, 1905,' was entirely by the inception and will of the Government. The Act passed on 11th August 1905.

The question of the Formula now entered on a new stage. The Act of Parliament was reported to the Assembly of 1906 by the Church Interests Committee; and a special committee was appointed to submit a formula to next Assembly. When their proposal was submitted, it led to an extraordinary number of motions, but in the end a form was sent down to presbyteries, and was disapproved by seventy-two of them. It was killed by 'the Reformed faith set forth in the Confession' which, as I have above said, was simply the Confession. But five overtures re-introduced the subject and a committee was again appointed to consider the subject further, and report their conclusions next year. Their proposal was approved and sent to presbyteries, which also

approved by forty-six to thirty-seven ; and, after still another debate, it was passed into law on 30th May 1910.¹ During the thirty years that the subject has been before the Church I have been on all the committees, and now, as has been said, am convener of a small committee to report on the course to be taken with regard to the questions that should now be put to office-bearers, and the like.

I have been asked what is said by my experience to be the power—not the general but the special power—that makes a great ecclesiastic or, though the terms are not synonymous, a church leader. I take greatness as including success. The question is a hard one. If I may attempt an answer, I must keep to my own observation of the Presbyterian Churches I have known. At the outset it has to be noted that church leaders are of two classes. There is the leader who might with Joshua (Joshua iii.) say to his Church, ‘Ye have not passed this way heretofore.’ There is also the leader whose chief business on the other hand is to keep to the ways of heretofore. The most

¹ Its terms are : ‘I hereby subscribe the Confession of Faith, declaring that I accept it as the Confession of this Church, and that I believe the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith contained therein.’

outstanding instance of this class is seen in the convener of the Committee for Arranging the Order of Business, who indeed is popularly spoken of as the leader. He is understood to give a lead, but has no appointment for such service. In the United Presbyterian Church there was no such understanding. Obviously for such a place one must be regarded as 'a safe man.' He reaches it by being often a member, making practical speeches, and giving evidence of business faculty and sound judgment. When once appointed he continues to be appointed, for his presbytery send him up every year. Always at his post he must have strength of body and mind. By the course of the debate and conference with his peers he knows the course to take. He knows when to speak, is skilful in compromise, and in manner is self-reliant and masterful. Principal Rainy's style was peculiar. He would go reasoning along, with eyelids half down, steering his way quietly, and at points impressively, through difficulties with apparent ease—a masterful way of its kind. Safe assertions and even truisms may come in with firmness. In truth the discerning think him rather a follower than a leader, yet he does lead because the many who are undecided follow him. His work is essentially that

of a manager. It is a post of honour and usefulness, and has a steady effect. One of the best of such leaders in my time was Dr. Scott. In appearance the doctor stood nearly six feet, with a round head, and clean-shaved round face inclining to square because of the solid jaw; an open blue eye and a frank, kindly manner, with something of the abrupt. In a speech he stood with his hands elbow-high, the points of their outspread fingers fitted, or being fitted, to each other.

Take now the leader who is not content with administering the present. He feels its needs, and has a vision of better things and how to reach them. His Church's duty and his own press upon him. He has a profound conception of the Church as the body of Christ. His uppermost wish is to move in line with the revealed will of God. The qualities which make such a man a leader are his faith, his foresight, his insight (they act like an instinct), his power of initiative and of perseverance, the manifest reality and depth of his convictions, the living power of God in his soul. Such a man will also certainly have some power of effective speech, and cannot fail of courage. To this class belonged Dr. James Robertson, founder of the Endowment Scheme for the erection of new parishes, of

which there are now four hundred and sixty. He was a powerful and spiritually-minded man, a far-seeing churchman and high-souled patriot. He was the only man whom Norman Macleod ever regarded as his ecclesiastical leader. We have also had Archibald Hamilton Charteris, Professor of Biblical Criticism in the University of Edinburgh. To him the Church owes the Committee on Christian Life and Work with its numerous agencies for good, the *Life and Work* magazine, the guilds, the organisation of women's work, the order of deaconesses, the initiation of movements in aid of Foreign Missions, the support of everything that tended to bring the Churches together. Though he would not have been called a man of power, he had a powerful, widespread, progressive influence. He was a skilful and ready debater, and a speaker whom it was very pleasing to listen to. Dr. John Macleod, Govan, had qualities which belong to this class (p. 247). So had Dr. James Paton, St. Paul's parish, Glasgow (p. 186).

I have known only two instances in which the two kinds of leaders were combined in a single person; and one even of them is doubtful, for, though Dr. Pirie took the lead in the anti-patronage movement, it was originated in the Assembly by an overture from the presbytery of Edinburgh,

supported by Dr. William Smith. Besides, it was largely advocated on grounds of expediency. The other in whom the characteristics (or, at least, the positions) of both classes of leaders met was the greatest of Scottish ecclesiastics in our day, Principal Rainy.

The very disappointments of Principal Rainy, as well as his successes, corroborate the view I have expressed of the outfit of an ecclesiastic. The Disestablishment agitation conducted by him and Principal Cairns would scarcely have been undertaken if there had been sufficient insight to perceive beneath the surface that people of our time dislike and distrust ecclesiastics entering the political arena, especially when their object is to bring pressure on a government to take revolutionary action upon a Church other than their own; that the solid mind of the country could not be reached in that way; and that Mr. Gladstone would prove more concerned to preserve the unity of the Liberal party than to take up the Church problem. Then what of the deplorable events accompanying the union of 1900? Would not insight and foresight have led timeously to some action by which they might have been obviated? But in truth we gather that there was in the nature of the Principal a con-

siderable degree of aloofness, and this always must stand in the way of insight. It would seem also that when he had made up his mind to a particular course he was so resolute that risks were not allowed their due weight. Yet withal he was, as need hardly be said, a man of great ability, piety, faith, the highest aims, and unflinching courage; and his had been the leading part among others in preparing the way for the union of the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church. I had some intercourse with Principal Rainy, and found him one of the frankest and kindest of my acquaintances. But again, why did such a man not accomplish something far grander still—which I believe was his ultimate aim—the union of the three great Churches? I often thought he had much in his power to that end. There was a great body of opinion in its favour. The thought of a general union wherever it was mooted on a public platform brought the most decisive and hearty applause. Why did he not at least make the attempt? This takes us back to the agitation for Disestablishment and Disendowment. It had made him impossible as a mediator, or a leader to the greater union. Indeed such was the effect of it, that even in his labours for the union of the two Churches many were misled into thinking that

a foremost object was the attainment of greater power against the Church of Scotland. It is a pleasure to recall how years afterwards, when his Church was in Parliament seeking redress of what it considered to be an injustice, and our Church was also there seeking what we thought ourselves entitled to have, relaxation of our Formula of Subscription, he was very sympathetic and willing we should get it.

Discoursing on ecclesiastics one thinks with comfort of a Higher than they all. And this recalls the concluding part of a conversation which Principal Rainy and I once had, by arrangement. I said: 'Waiving any question of law, why should not the Church of Scotland say to your Church, "You build here and we shall go yonder; we shall advise our people in the district to attend your church here, and you shall do the same for us yonder?"' His answer was, 'A Church likes to follow its people.' I then said, 'And is this never to end?' And he said, 'The Lord reigneth.'

Having been drawn into speaking of individuals I must mention others, who though belonging to a very different category, were of distinguished eminence. In my time there have been three—Macleod, Tulloch, and Story.

Norman Macleod was a man large in body, soul, and spirit, whose countenance spoke frankness. He moved in an atmosphere of power and sympathy. His life and ministry were an inspiration to the Church, and helped other Churches to think more kindly of us. Once in private and once in public he impressed me in a way not to be forgotten. When I was in Campsie (where his father had been minister) two much esteemed ladies, Misses Macfarlane, old friends of his family, invited me to spend an evening with Dr. Macleod. And such an evening ! Without stop or break it seemed to be that he poured out of his experience a stream of anecdote, serious and comic, with vivid reproduction of character, the whole brimming over with humour, wit and pathos, and instructive as well as entertaining. In the General Assembly I heard his great last speech on missions in India. It had the character of all his speeches, differing only in its greatness. He threw his whole being into it, speaking from his heart of hearts with commanding ease and oratory. He lightened it with touches of humour, he drove home its points with unexpected facts, he came quickly round a corner on his opponents, he swayed his audience from laughter to tears, to solemn self-condemning conviction, and to the stirring of a new hope. Though

his health was not good, he spoke with great power for an hour and a half. Alas, he did not long survive the effort.

John Tulloch, in the latter part of his life principal clerk of the General Assembly, was of fine presence. He had a manly physique and bearing. The fair colour of his hair and beard (as its way is) was passing with good effect into whiteness. It gave pleasure to look on his face with its delicately warm hue and fine blue eye. His speaking with no effort at literary style had yet a note of distinction. I have heard him speak with overflowing eyes, and at other times with vehemence, his face reddening and his voice and manner swelling with indignation. Evident honesty and straightforwardness always added to the power of his words. In theology he was liberal, but neither extreme nor aggressive.

Robert Herbert Story succeeded Tulloch in the Assembly clerkship. No one owed more to personal appearance than he did. He would probably be the first that a stranger coming in would make a study of—a fine white beard (with the original black still showing in the moustache), and white hair; black eyes with the brow set square above, almost overhanging them; faultless features, expressive of culture and study, and

fixed apparently in sternness; all made more effective by an air of dignity—one looks and wonders if he is what he seems. The expert may discern symptoms in the face that under the surface there is a tender spot somewhere. He spoke with much kindness when conveying to me the thanks of the Assembly from the chair. But his general bearing and manner of speech gave the impression that he was not quite free of the feeling of caste. His speaking was in quiet tones, deliberate and expressive. He could on occasion make speeches that were in all respects very fine, as when (1904) he proposed the preparation of a pastoral letter on the services of Knox at the four hundredth anniversary of the Reformer's birth. But when dealing with opponents he was proverbial for the withering flash of his eye and his merciless sarcasm—in the same spirit also he would speak of matters in the Confession of Faith—all so severe as to be painful even to those who were on his side. Had it not been for this, his important influence would have come earlier and been greater.

CHAPTER XI

REUNION OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

It will be best, I think, to begin by following without interruption the course which the subject has taken in the courts of the Churches, and then to give an account of myself, with some notes about others.

So long ago as 1870 overtures came to the General Assembly on union with other Presbyterian Churches. In that year it is recorded that the one from the presbytery of Forfar was read. It had been moved in the presbytery by Mr. Myles, Aberlemno. It set forth that it became the National Church to seek a remedy for so great a national evil as the separation between the Churches with its deplorable consequences, and it overtured the Assembly to appoint a committee to consider how union could be effected, and what alterations were necessary to that end. The Assembly spoke in much the same terms as it has ever since employed respecting the manifold evils; and

recorded its hearty desire to take all possible steps for reunion 'consistently with the principles on which this Church is founded.' And it appointed a committee—Dr. Crawford and Lord Polwarth joint-conveners. Overtures continued to come for the next five years, and the committee reported from year to year. The Assembly expressed its readiness to receive suggestions from other Churches, but never offered any itself. So matters continued till 1878.

The Assembly of 1878 authorised the committee to approach other Churches with 'an assurance that while the General Assembly maintain inviolate the principle of the national recognition of the Christian religion as contained in the Confession of Faith, and the sacredness of the ancient religious endowment . . . they earnestly wish to consider what other Churches may state in frank and friendly conference as to the causes which at present prevent the other Churches from sharing the trust now reposed in this Church alone.'

A copy of the deliverance was sent to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Original Secession Church, the United Presbyterian Church, and the Free Church.

The communication was cordially welcomed by

the Churches, and all deplored the evils of disunion. *The Free Church* agreed in the desire 'to maintain inviolate the principle of a national recognition of the Christian religion in accordance with the Confession of Faith,' but pointed out that the Claim of Right of 1842 and the Protest of 1843 'prevent them from supporting the maintenance of the existing establishment as at present constituted.' *The United Presbyterian Church* said that 'in accordance with the principles and history of that Church it is impossible for the Synod to contemplate sharing with the Established Church the trust reposed in it by the State.' But they expressed their deep conviction of the importance of the supreme courts of the three great Presbyterian Churches giving prominence to the Christian duty of seeking union of all the Presbyterian Churches. *The Reformed Presbyterian Church* requires the 'recognition of the descending obligation of the National Covenant of Scotland, and of the Solemn League and Covenant of the three kingdoms,' and also rejection of the constitution of the State because of its relations to the Church of England. *The United Original Seceders* 'maintain it to be the duty and privilege of nations, like individuals, to recognise and support the Church of Christ';

but they also hold by the perpetual obligation of the Covenants.

On these replies being submitted, the General Assembly recorded their gratification at their cordiality and courtesy, regretted that they did not encourage the hope of further correspondence being followed by immediate results, and directed suitable replies to be made. They further recorded 'their continued hearty willingness and desire to take all possible steps consistent with the maintenance of an establishment of religion to promote reunion.'

Seven years later the spirit of union spoke out again. Two synods and five presbyteries over-tured the Assembly of 1886. This may be accounted for by a combination of causes: the exhibition and aggravation of the evils of disunion by the persistency of the war between the Churches; the hope which some took from the manner in which petitions were signed against Dick Peddie's Bill; the fact that at Church defence meetings a motion was generally made in favour of reunion, and was always received with enthusiasm; the introduction into Parliament by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Robert Finlay, M.P. for the Inverness Burghs, of a Bill to declare the

constitution of the Church of Scotland, its main intention being to secure against such action of the civil courts as had led to the Disruption. All these things go to explain the renewal of the movement.

The General Assembly, proceeding on the overtures, passed a resolution substantially the same as before, renewing 'the assurance of its readiness to promote union on the basis of the establishment,' and remitted the matter now to the Church Interests Committee—Lord Balfour and Sir Robert Anstruther, M.P., joint-conveners. This committee were directed to be ready to receive any communication. *The Free Church* in reply referred to their communication of 1879, and to a resolution of their own adhering to former declarations 'as to the propriety and necessity of Disestablishment and Disendowment.' But if the Established Church should see their way to treat the points of difference as open for discussion, they would readily accept an invitation to enter into conference. The answer to this by the Church Interests Committee (28th May 1886) contained the remarkable statement that a discussion on establishment and endowment 'would have no common ground on which to proceed'—which the Free Church 'wholly decline to admit.'

The United Presbyterian Church also adhered to its communication of 1879. I need not follow the other Churches.

The Laymen's League originated in 1890, constituted of men of any Church. It had for its objects to declare against Disestablishment and the secularising of the endowments, and to promote reunion and any legislation that might appear necessary to remove obstacles. It prepared a 'memorandum as to the reconstruction of the Church of Scotland,' and sent it to the Church Interests Committee. It was laid before the Assembly of 1892, along with certain resolutions of this committee upon it. The Assembly cordially received the memorandum; approved of the resolutions, and recorded their readiness for 'any reasonable arrangements which will make it possible' for others to share 'the privileges and heritage of a national Church, if they desire.'

It is proper to notice that in 1896 negotiations for union between the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church, which had been dropped in 1873, were resumed. On the 7th May 1896 the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church had before it a communication from the Free Church,

saying they felt strongly that the ties between the two Churches should be strengthened, and 'their co-operation more cordial and explicit.'

The Synod, on the motion of Professor Orr, cordially agreed that every endeavour should be made in that direction, and was prepared to enter into conference regarding it ; but recorded 'its strong conviction that the religious necessities of the country and the situation of the two Churches pointed to the larger solution of an incorporating union as alone adequate to the present circumstances.'

In 1898 a draft Bill to declare the constitution of the Church of Scotland was submitted to the Assembly by me as convener of the Committee on the Constitution. It was drafted in pursuance of a direction by the previous Assembly to endeavour to frame provisions that might remove misapprehensions regarding the power and jurisdiction of the Church. The Assembly resolved that in the event of its appearing that a considerable body of opinion outside the Church is in favour of the promotion of a Bill in the terms of the draft the Church should undertake its promotion ; and that, if such a Bill were promoted by others, it should be supported by the Church.

The committee were continued, to receive communications on the subject and report.

This Bill has been publicly said by Dr. Taylor Innes to be 'the high-water mark of the Church of Scotland.' No communications ever were received. It would have prevented the Disruption, but was of little use now.

Again overtures in 1901 came up from one synod and four presbyteries, urging the duty of co-operation, and the appointment of a committee to convey the desire of our Church to others, and to communicate with them on the subject. The previous year had seen the union that constituted the United Free Church, and this no doubt accounted for the main subject of these overtures being co-operation.

The Assembly in their deliverance welcome the expressions of the desire to promote union; reaffirm their desire to further it; are deeply sensible that the marked growth of sympathy and cordiality imposes solemn responsibility on the courts of the Churches and those that guide them; and, while steadfastly adhering to the principles of the national recognition of religion, and of the conservation of the patrimony of the Church for religious uses, fully recognise that the

conscientious convictions and historical position of other parties to a settlement must also be considered and respected.

The momentous judgment of the House of Lords in the great Church case was given on 1st August 1904.

The formation of the Presbyterian Church in India was reported to the Assembly of 1905. It was constituted of no fewer than six Presbyterian Churches.

Once more overtures came up in 1907, from so many as seven synods and three presbyteries, pressing the duty of approaching other Churches with a view to union. The Assembly, though it had so long professed great desire, now feared 'the danger of hasty or premature action,' and appointed a committee—Dr. Norman Macleod convener—to consider the overtures in the light of the grave national and religious interests involved and the difficulties to be overcome—confining its attention to the subject of Presbyterian reunion.

This year the union took place of the colleges and mission work in Calcutta.

During the Assemblies of 1907 the Assembly

Hall of the Church of Scotland was the scene of a joint meeting for conference on an important subject of common and public interest, with the Moderator of the United Free Church in the chair; and in 1908 this was repeated on another subject, in the Assembly Hall of the United Free Church, with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland in the chair. In the former case the subject was Sabbath Observance, and in the latter, co-operation in work for soldiers. On this subject the Secretary of State for War, Mr. (now Viscount) Haldane, among others, addressed the meeting.

In 1908, on the report of the committee appointed the previous year, the Assembly resolved 'to request the other Presbyterian Churches to confer with them in a friendly and generous spirit on the present ecclesiastical situation in Scotland; and more especially in the meantime with a view to discover in what manner a larger measure of Christian fellowship and co-operation than now exists may be secured, and the way further prepared for that closer union for which many hearts now eagerly long and pray.' I regarded the chief place here assigned to co-operation as practically and theoretically objectionable, and said so in the Assembly.

In reply, the Free Church cordially reciprocate the desire that the obstacles to the reunion and reorganisation of Scottish Presbyterianism may be removed, but ‘they do not regard the present as a time when they could hope to render useful service in entering on negotiations of so arduous and delicate a character.’

The United Free Church again expressed the gratification with which they received the proposal to enter into conference; and proceeded thus:—

The Assembly, while fully recognising the duty of this Church to promote fellowship and co-operation with all kindred Churches in the service of their common Lord, and, in particular, with the Church of Scotland, with whose operations those of the United Free Church of Scotland are in such close contact, both at home and abroad, are unable, for the reasons stated in the report [of a committee], hopefully to entertain the suggestion that conference on co-operation offers the path best fitted to lead to union.

At the same time, the Assembly, believing that the outstanding causes of separation between the Churches might properly form the subject of conference between brethren who desire the removal of everything that mars the peace and prosperity of the Church of Christ in the land, declare, in accordance with the report of the committee, their readiness, should this course approve itself to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to enter into unrestricted conference with their brethren of that Church on the existing ecclesiastical situation and on

the main causes which keep the Churches apart, with the earnest hope that, by God's blessing, misunderstandings and hindrances may be removed, and the great object of Presbyterian reunion in Scotland thereby advanced.

The response of the Church of Scotland was in the following terms :—

The General Assembly are much gratified by the reply of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland to the communication addressed to them by last General Assembly. They highly appreciate its frank and brotherly spirit, and rejoice in its expression of the same earnest hope as is cherished by this Assembly that the hindrances to Presbyterian reunion may be removed.

While their brethren of the United Free Church of Scotland are unable hopefully to entertain the suggestion that conference on co-operation between the Churches offers the path best fitted to lead to union, the Assembly most gladly find that the Assemblies are of one mind regarding the promotion of fellowship and co-operation between the Churches; and the Assembly anew record their thankfulness for the large measure in which this spirit already prevails, and their earnest desire that it may still increase.

The General Assembly, in accordance with the deliverance of last Assembly, and in terms of the reply of the United Free Church of Scotland, declare their readiness to enter into unrestricted conference with their brethren of that Church on the existing ecclesiastical situation, and on the main causes which keep the Churches apart, in the earnest hope that, by God's blessing, misunderstandings and hindrances may be removed, and the great object of Presbyterian reunion thereby advanced.

At the bidding of the convener of the committee that had the matter in hand, Dr. Norman Macleod, I had the honour and pleasure of preparing this deliverance. It was carried not only with unanimity, but with enthusiasm.

The exchange of those communications was immediately followed by each of the Assemblies appointing a committee of one hundred and five members, taken from throughout the whole Church, for conference—the joint-conveners of ours are Dr. Norman Macleod and Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and of theirs Dr. Henderson and Dr. Robson.

This was the last Assembly of Dr. Scott. Health failed, and on a quiet Sabbath morning, 18th April 1909, he fell on sleep and rested from his labours.

We have now come to the place at which I have to give account of myself in this matter. The subject has long been of special interest to me. I think this must date almost from the time when, in 1870, the General Assembly confessed the evils of disunion. I have been reminded of an occasion more than thirty years ago when I expressed my mind. I had been seven or eight years at Earls-ton when he who is now the Rev. Sir William

Robertson Nicoll, LL.D., came to Kelso to the church in which Horatius Bonar had ministered. It might be a year afterwards that, in 1878, we met by invitation at the house of one of my elders and farmers, Mr. Weatherly. And Sir William has told me that what he recollects of the meeting is that a reference of mine to Earlston, and the two United Presbyterian churches there, led him to remark that it seemed a great pity so many useless churches were to be found in Scotland. Whereupon, he says, I replied with great warmth and earnestness that the thing pressed upon me as a great evil and spoke a good deal about it. I must, therefore, have been of that mind previously ; and I have continued to be so. No opportunity of expressing it similar to that, or in writing, has been missed by me. Public opportunities of speaking I have not had strength to embrace, even if it had been expedient.

In the conclusion of my booklet *The Truth about the Church of Scotland*, 1891, in defence of the Church (p. 286), there is the following passage : ‘ Wherefore should this wrangle go on for ever, to the annoyance of all good men and the hindrance of much good work ? Have those gentlemen who have been responsible for it considered how much better they and we might have been employed,

and how great the result might have been, if during all these years we had been so employed ? Should it not now cease ? If the ability and ingenuity, and private counsellings, and public demonstrations, which have so long been devoted to the policy of breaking down, were turned to the discovery of a plan of union, and of building up, a result would quickly be reached at which all Christian nations would rejoice.'

My lecture on *Jurisdiction in Matters Ecclesiastical*, 1896, has the following preface : ' I am unable and unwilling to throw off the conviction that, if the subject of these pages were more generally and clearly understood, the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland would find that they are nearer to each other in their views and desires regarding it than they suppose. My design in publishing this portion of my lecture is to promote good understanding, and to contribute towards friendly relations.'

When I was called to the chair of the Assembly in 1897 the opposing forces were still full of the war spirit. My closing address was published under the title of *Loyalty : the Christ our King*. May I introduce my reference to it in this connection with a quotation from the *British Weekly* :

‘The Moderator of the Church of Scotland closed the Assembly of this year with one of the finest addresses we have ever read, an address remarkable alike for its literary beauty, its depth of feeling and its singularly high, strong and spiritual tone.’ Toward its close there is this passage: ‘I do not advocate living in peace in order that the Churches may go on indefinitely, each just as it is. I advocate it because I have faith in God that by His blessing on conduct and methods agreeable to His will He would lead the Churches, before long time has passed, into a frame of mind in which their difficulties could be considered in true friendliness and with sincere purpose to devise the best way to overcome them. I mean not the peace of apathy, but of high and serious purpose. In the interval it would not be possible, and should not be sought, to hinder any Church from doing anything for itself which it may think necessary for the more efficient discharge of its duty. But, for my part, so far as our own Church is concerned, I should desire nothing to be done for that purpose which would be of a kind to increase existing difficulties, but everything rather, so far as possible, to make the way for their removal casier. I would seek to postpone everything that can be postponed to that better day for

which peace would qualify us all, and for which we ought to hope and labour.' Again, 'Would to God that all right-hearted men would band themselves together and say, "Let there be peace"—turning, if necessary, from their earthly leaders to their Heavenly Leader. For I cannot doubt that all such men believe, as I do, that peace for a period not very long would, by the blessing and guidance of the Head of the Church, save from much sin, solve our worst problems, and bring in a new and glorious day for the cause of Christ in our beloved land.'

Previous to that, and all along, I have acted in consonance with the views here expressed. In church committees, while I faithfully did my part in putting into shape anything that had been resolved on, I did not conceal that in our attempts to commend the Church to other Churches I thought we were but trifling, and that we should aim at a large patriotic statesmanlike measure. In two General Assemblies I spoke to that effect. Yet so little did I think we depended on a statesman, and so much did I believe our great need was to have the spirit and purpose of our Master, that when an intimate friend sent me a sermon in which he sighed for a statesman, I sent him the

honest reply that I thought the presence of a statesman was not so much wanted as the absence of the devil—in other words, absence of all unchristian mindedness.

I did more. The Assembly's Commission on the Religious Condition of the People met the presbytery of Earlston on Monday, 1st July 1895. Next morning after breakfast its much respected convener, Dr. Marshall Lang, strolled with me sunning ourselves in front of the manse, and I broached the subject. I said that, calling ourselves the National Church, I thought it became us to do something more than we had done, and that I would gladly serve unseen under him, or any one having pre-eminence among us, rendering any assistance I could. But he could not see his way. I cannot say after what interval it may have been that walking with Dr. Scott in Edinburgh I spoke similarly to him, and with the same result. By and by I had the same experience with Lord Balfour. I also took the opportunity of an eminent jurist being a day in the country, to talk over the suggestion that we should try our hand at framing something which might meet the case. He was quite sympathetic, but not disposed to work, and the attempt was never made by us.

Time and events moved on, but the moving seemed to be in a circle. Overtures came up and the Assembly repeated its confession of existing evils, offered to listen to anybody, and made proposals to others accompanied by a condition which these had already declared that they could not accept. To the proposals the same answers were repeated, and always the evils of disunion were deplored. Experience seemed unable to teach that such things as were being done in hope of making the Church more acceptable failed of that effect, while we refused even to touch the real stumbling-block. Every good thing suffered from recurrent violent outbreaks of attack and defence—destined to recur and to cause ever-increasing mischief. Speakers of influence in the Churches, established or not, in presenting their case to the public gave the impression, I suppose unintentionally, that their Church possessed more freedom than it did. To think of such proceedings having gone on for a generation filled me with shame. And unless Scripture and experience were false, I was convinced that a continuance of them would bring a painful day of reckoning for the Churches.

In course of time my years and other circumstances made it as fitting for me as for the friends

I have named to move. Moreover, the providence of God had brought us a season of the peace for which I had pleaded with the Churches from the chair. Then came the catastrophe involved in the judgment of the House of Lords in the great Church case. It seemed to me an appalling outcome of our ecclesiastical quarrelling; fraught with grave lessons for us all. It was cope-stone to the pile of thoughts which hitherto had not overcome my reluctance to address the public. Now there was new reason, and an obvious duty to be discharged by some one, and I could see no hope of any one else taking it up. And lastly, in retirement, my mind was at leisure from professional duty. Thus began my papers on union. I wrote *Churches and the Law*.

I showed the manuscript to the then procurator, and, without reference to its correctness, the thought of publishing it displeased him. I showed it also to Lord Balfour of Burleigh. He said plainly, 'I disapprove of your policy'; but he thought there was much in the paper that it would be well to publish in such a way that it would be seen by more people, and be less ephemeral, than in the form of a pamphlet. And I say with gratitude that it is to him I owe the suggestion to offer it for *Blackwood's Magazine*.

It was published there in December 1904, and afterwards distributed as a pamphlet. Saving what I have here said, no leader in the Church ever spoke to me of any of my papers on union, or so much as mentioned union to me.

That first paper notes that the law courts can make no distinction between a Church and associations generally unless the distinction has been made by State law ; it points out the difference of meaning between ' spiritual independence ' and ' independent jurisdiction ' ; and compares the relation of the Church of Scotland and of non-established Churches to law. If there are two powers, each in its own sphere claiming to be supreme within the same geographical area, it would seem to be not only duty but absolute necessity that they should arrange together as to the discharge of their several responsibilities—especially if both are delegates from one and the same higher power. It ought to be our aim to get something better than either the position of the Church of Scotland or of the non-established Churches. The crisis caused by the Church case has moved us all, and has brought home the duty of action with an impressiveness that constitutes a call from our Master.

Next year, 1905, in the December *Blackwood* there appeared *The Scottish Churches: the Present and Future*. It was afterwards published along with one of the following year, and I shall repeat a sentence or two from the preface to them: 'It was but yesterday that one asked me if I really believed that there could be union in less than a generation. My answer is this: I do believe there can be union in a very short time. I believe in God. He has done more marvellous things than that would be. If in His abounding grace the consciences of men were touched and charged with a conviction of duty, then would arise such a tide that no man would be able, or would wish, to stand in its way. Already it has begun to flow. . . . I know He has the power to bring us speedily to a sound and righteous union, and I dare not say He has not the will. Does any one dare to say it?'

The paper I have last mentioned, *The Scottish Churches: the Present and Future*, began with a reference to the painful sight there had been of three Churches, near akin, under the necessity of being in the House of Commons looking each of them to its own things. The ecclesiastical condition seems to be scarcely less unsatisfactory than before, unless it be in the increased longing

among us for better things. The article proceeds to consider the position since the passing of the Churches Act, 1905. Towards its close it asks, Cannot a so-called established Church be a free Church? Assuming freedom in all things spiritual to be an attribute of a Christian Church, surely an intelligent nation would wish that its Church should have this acknowledged. Then, as my contribution to the solving of the problem, I make a suggestion stated in the form of a Bill. The article concludes by referring to an instructive incident in the Zulu War. A young man having escaped with the colours of his regiment, wrapped them around him that he might swim the river for safety to himself and them. They bore him down. Regimental colours now no more appear in the field. It is enough that all regiments fight as one, against the common foe and for the colours of the king. When shall such counsels prevail among the Churches?

The article which was published along with that appeared in *Blackwood*, November 1906, as *The Scottish Churches: An Appeal*. It began thus: 'Last May a new and notable thing occurred in Edinburgh. Three Churches, each embodied in what it calls the General Assembly, came and sat

down as nearly as possible on the same seat. Two were practically under the same roof, and the third separated only by a narrow street. It was on the same day also. They have exactly the same government—their very procedure and nomenclature the same. They have the same purpose, and they all say it is the very highest of purposes. They have “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” They sat some ten days, and rose again and went away, and all the time they never exchanged a single word, not even a look. Were they ashamed? “Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.” Others blush for them.’

In more things there is a striking likeness. They all teach, Love thy neighbour as thyself; and, Do to others as you would have them do to you. And they are also all alike in their practice of these precepts! Each has a committee to keep guard, and hold its own against the others. Each of them says (with what humility is not known) that it is not perfect; but it gladly takes opportunity of showing that, compared with others, it is a paragon of perfection. Add to all this the enormous waste of money and men on superfluous masonry and ministers.

I think such a state of matters is great sin.

They may not admit it. But all the way back to the days when the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans, or when ‘the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him,’ ecclesiasticism seems to be accompanied by self-deception. It is enough for my purpose if I may say it is *absolutely wrong*. When anything very wrong is known to exist, the duty exists—immediate and imperative—to remove or correct it. The article then deals with the excuses for evading or delaying the discharge of this duty, including proposals for co-operation. Is it too much to plead that the two principal Churches should at least come and reason together, with the determination to face the problem in a practical way, and to grapple with it till they have found a scheme of union which would commend itself to Church and nation and be a blessing to both? And so on. While I was putting this article in pamphlet form I received a letter from Dr. Pollok, Principal of the Presbyterian College, Halifax, in which he said: ‘What a blessing union has been to Canada it is hardly possible to express. . . . The truth is—the state of Scotland is the greatest scandal in Christendom to-day.’

This paper led to a leader in the *Scotsman*. It said my language, though strong, was not too

strong. I had quoted Dr. Whyte as appealing to journalists to come to our help in a way they never yet had done. This was taken notice of, but certainly was not acted upon. We were told that union was a word which would alarm Scottish churchmen for some time to come. 'The lamentations of Dr. Mair' was one of its flings, and so forth. The truth is that whenever this organ dealt with ecclesiastical matters it was rather given to a manner which, it may be fairly said, was offensive to those who took a serious interest in them. I could not believe that the writers intended, or indeed knew, the effect produced, and I took the opportunity to call and talk the subject over with the proprietor. I am glad to say that our meeting was most friendly and satisfactory.

Nothing can better show the progress made, or perhaps we should rather say, the rising of the tide, than a remark that was made on the day of Principal Rainy's funeral, 7th March 1907, by Dr. Scott. He said to Dr. Ross Taylor of the United Free Church: 'If we don't move, they will take it out of our hands.' About a year before this Dr. Taylor had got a colleague and successor, and he had told me that he was intending to

devote the remainder of his strength to the furtherance of union. But his health failed, and the end came in December 1907. Dr. Scott passed an overture through the presbytery of Edinburgh. I had seen it beforehand and was not quite satisfied with it. It was one of the numerous overtures of that year already referred to.

In the Assembly Dr. Scott, explaining that his views had undergone considerable modification since the presbytery had passed the overture, proposed the motion which has already been given as the resolution of the Assembly. A fourth motion was moved by Mr. Warr in the words of Dr. Scott's deserted overture. A motion followed this, proposed by Mr. Colquhoun Kerr in a very vigorous speech. He convulsed the Assembly by 'a most curious case of metempsychosis—the soul of Dr. Scott has got into the body of Mr. Warr!' Four motions were withdrawn, and the first and second were voted on. The second was an elaborate motion by Professor Cooper, and included 'the various communions of the Reformed Church.' It received about thirty votes.

I supported Dr. Scott's motion, saying it would be foolish to find fault with details. I believed the movement was of God. As for warnings against rushing it, the power of the Spirit of God

might bring it soon. For my part, I left the setting of the pace to Him.

Another article, *The Scottish Churches : National Religion*, appeared in *Blackwood* for October 1907. It expresses the belief that there are three matters on which there is sufficient agreement for a basis of practical thought : (1) the national recognition of religion ; (2) the spiritual freedom of the Churches ; (3) the retention of religious endowments for religion. The first may be said to involve the more important parts of the case between established and non-established Churches. Solution of the problems of the first would go far to dispose of the difficulties of the second. The third might wait till some practical progress has been made with the others. The article therefore confines itself to the first.

Dr. Chalmers at a public meeting in 1845 in a vehement passage exclaimed (I summarise) : ‘ Who cares about the Free Church—or any church—compared with the Christian good of the people of Scotland ? The moral and religious well-being of the population is of infinitely higher importance than the advancement of any sect.’ Many will accept this who can hardly refrain from adding that their own Church is of the best type for that great end.

By national religion is not meant the religiousness of the individual members of the nation, whether rulers or others. Such phrases are struggles to express in few words the great truth that there is a Supreme Being who claims the worship and obedience of nations as well as of persons. Here enters 'The Civil Magistrate.' These words form the title of chapter xxiii. of the Confession. There we find set forth what his power and duty in relation to the Church are and are not. We are not told who he is, only—'God the supreme Lord and King of all the world hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him over the people, for His own glory and the public good.' For the whole nation this technically is the Sovereign—in Britain, King, Lords and Commons, all personified in the King. In that chapter the Confession enunciates the principle of national religion. It uses no such vague expression as 'religion' but 'the Church.' The doctrine is that the civil magistrate as a subject and an official servant of the King of Kings shall care for His cause, and, in particular, for His Church.

Argument used by the United Free Church before the House of Lords shows that in their opinion the Church of Christ should be recognised as such in our laws. Principal Hutton maintains

this in a letter to the *Scotsman* on 21st October 1895, giving the essence of what he had said in an address to his students. It may be held to be the opinion of the Churches, agreeably to the Confession of Faith that the civil magistrate ought to recognise the Church of Christ as such, and of course to treat it accordingly. This may correctly be called the principle of national religion. It possesses the distinctive characteristics of a principle—equally true for all times, places and circumstances—invariable and inviolable.

Then comes the question, How may the civil magistrate most wisely discharge this duty? Here there is great room for various reasonable opinions, as there is in every matter where the question is which of several courses obedient to a principle is in all the circumstances the best. Supposing now that he has made up his mind (or that it has been made up for him) to recognise the Church and how to do it, his first act is necessarily to legislate, for the simple reason that he has no other language in which he can speak. The article then proceeds to state briefly points which the recognition should contain and the advantages of it.

Recognition should contain—(1) an acknowledgment of the Church as a divine institution, the

chief and heaven-appointed means for the promotion of righteousness and godliness; (2) it should acknowledge such attributes of the Church as are to be respected by the civil magistrate, especially its right and power to exercise its own jurisdiction and to legislate in its own internal affairs; (3) it should acknowledge or imply the duty of co-operation with the Church for the great ends for which it exists, by such means, for example, as providing facilities for the religious instruction of the young, the promotion of measures for the moral and religious improvement of the people, and making provision for the supply of religious ordinances in public institutions under its direct control, such as the army and navy; (4) recognition should clear the relations between the Church and the State which have given rise to conflicting views, and with deplorable circumstances; (5) Christian people believe that such an attitude of the State, honouring God, would be attended by the blessing of heaven, and that this blessing should be asked on all functions, and the proceedings of all assemblies of a national character.

My next paper, *The Scottish Churches: the Hope of Union*, made its first appearance in

pamphlet form, early in 1909. It found an important gain in the fact that each of the Churches had stated authoritatively and distinctly only one indispensable condition—the Church of Scotland, *the national recognition of religion*; and the United Free Church, the *principle of her spiritual freedom*. Both are crucial, but either Church might stand by both. It discusses the unsuitableness and insufficiency of co-operation to meet the case and to satisfy the convictions and feelings that are moving men. Then comes a section headed ‘Caution and Timidity,’ illustrated from the past within our own day, followed by another headed ‘A Fine Field’ in Scotland, which has the happy distinction among the nations of all but solidly holding the same doctrine, worship, discipline and government. Under ‘The Hope’ it is said the dominating fact must be the desire and will of our great Head. It cannot be doubted that our divisions must be grievous in His sight, or that it is His will that we all should be one *that the world may believe that the Father sent Him*. Is not this the very thing that many people are now openly refusing to believe in the sense in which our Churches understand it? And yet these same Churches refuse to present the one

argument which is given by their Lord as fitted to overcome that disbelief.

The paper concludes after this manner: when the Churches, leaders and followers, will face the words ‘that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me,’ and will present themselves before their Head with full purpose to obey His desire and will; when they put themselves in His hands to be fellow-workers with Him ‘that they all may be one’—estimating in that light the things that divide them; when in short they look straight through and above all else to Him—seeing His eye upon them and hearing His voice; then they will find their hold on some old things loosening, and their hold on some still older things tightening; then they will come nearer to each other than in any other possible way, on surer ground and with a clearer conscience; then they may count upon heaven’s guiding and prospering; then they will be able in confident trust to contemplate without anxiety any new arrangement. It is true that all this is but the constant duty and privilege of the Christian. It should therefore be the easier. In it is *The Hope of Union*.

The last words I spoke on the subject in the General Assembly were in answer to a most unex-

pected call. One in the body of the hall said he desired to hear what my attitude was. I said there are certain things which are usually assumed rather than spoken, but there are occasions on which they ought to be spoken. 'There is one that, I think, ought to be spoken out to-night. I shall introduce it by words that occur in the report of the proceedings of the conference of two hundred and forty-two bishops at Lambeth last summer. They said—We believe the Spirit of God has at this time been calling us with special clearness to consider seriously the dangers we are in from our unhappy divisions. I believe the same. I believe that the power which has brought us thus far on the way towards union is the power of the Spirit of God. Much has been said of difficulties in the way. If I have that knowledge of Church Law with which you are pleased to credit me, no one should know the difficulties better than I do. The way in which I deal with them is this—I meet them face to face with this, If the Spirit of God calls us to a duty He will see us through it. If I am asked for my policy, my answer is, "One step enough for me." That step has been, and at present is, to get the Churches into conference. This has been reached. For what is to follow I once said from that chair,

I believe in God. I say it now again, I believe in God.'

The committees of the two Churches gave in the same report of the conference to their respective Assemblies of 1910. They said: 'It was a gratifying feature of the meetings that upon both sides there was a frank expression of opinion, and that cordiality and good feeling marked all the discussions.' They gave a narrative of procedure; and a statement of the existing ecclesiastical situation, which occupies four pages and brings out strongly the evils of disunion. Other matters are reported to be under consideration. The committees are of opinion that a distinct step forward has been taken; they have been impressed with a sense of the large amount of agreement that there is in respect of general principles, and they ask for reappointment.

The committees were reappointed with instructions to continue their deliberations, and to report to next Assembly. Since then the conference has been held once a month.

My business is with the past, and having come to the present I lay down my pen. It is permissible, however, to say that on this subject of

reunion my views have never wavered, nor my hope fluctuated. The groundwork of facts and truth and duty on which they rest has made this impossible. It has done more ; it has brought men and Churches to earnestness about realities, and to good will, moving both reason and conscience and pious regard to the will of our great Head. And it would seem there can be but one result—and that right early.

CONCLUSION

I AM thankful that I was brought into being to know the wonderful, inexplicable thing or power which we call Life; and to know something of its acting in the human body and soul; and to have seen the manifestation of it in the infinite variety of living things; and to have learnt that it is everywhere in earth and air and sea; and to see it generation after generation—the young life in each compassed about with the love of that which went before it; and to know how human beings live with one another, and with the countless others that are lower than man.

I am thankful for the Scriptures and for that which, among unnumbered wonders, they reveal on this subject of life—that there are higher beings than man, though the eye cannot see them; and that above all is the Father of us all, with whom is the fountain of life, and the Lord Jesus Christ His eternal Son, and the promised Comforter the Holy Spirit; and that with them I may commune more freely than with any whom I see. I

am thankful to have the divine proclamation of 'no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus'; and of grace sufficient for holy and happy living; and to have the assurances and the hope of life for ever with the Saviour in His glory; and meantime, unsatisfied with all this world's best, to be able to say, The Lord is the portion of my soul.

I am thankful to have no doubt of the complete agreement between the Word of God and the ways of God as I have seen them. I am thankful to know of the wonderful revelation that science, especially in these last days, has given us of the mysteries and hidden powers of nature, to the glory of the great Creator. And what shall I say more? 'Great and marvellous are Thy works Lord God Almighty, just and true are Thy ways Thou King of Saints.' 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'

I am thankful that my appointed work was the ministry of the Gospel, and that suitable fields of labour were allotted me.

I am thankful for the long life that has been given me, and for the services laid to my hand that I have been enabled to render to the Church of God and to others, and for all the way by which

I have been led. It has not indeed been a way that one would have chosen, for, though it has brought me greater things than I could have dreamed of, it has often been hard. There must be multitudes more than can be numbered who would not have chosen the way they have been brought, but it is well for all of us that God is wiser than we ; and even the hardest things have comforts of their own that are sent along with them.

Fourscore has not tired me of life. Indeed mere life, mere living, neither produces tiredness nor becomes tired. And, except in rare cases, we always aim at continuing it. Does not this help to show that life was intended to go on, that we were meant for immortality ? Tiredness of life comes from burdens of the body and the spirit. I have said I am not tired ; yet in this world, as was said by Job, ‘ I would not live alway.’ Nor could I be persuaded to face a lifetime again. Once is enough. ‘ **HE** hath done all things well.’ ‘ To God only wise be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.’

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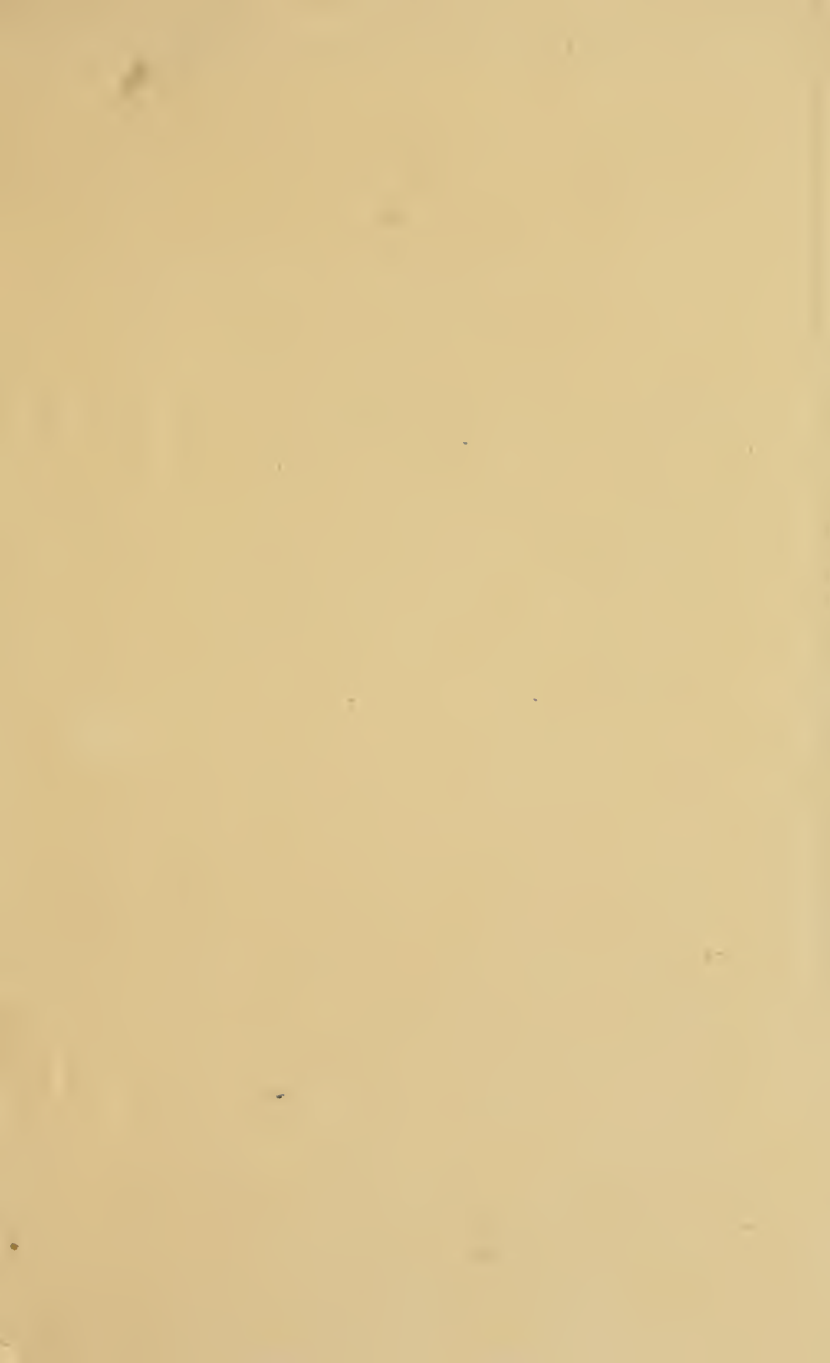
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